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COMICS ARE IT

DIRTY DANCING

Is a Tour? Tama Janowitz Checks It Out

BOOGIE DOWN PRODUCTIONS

A Rapper's Rise From Homelessness To Greatness

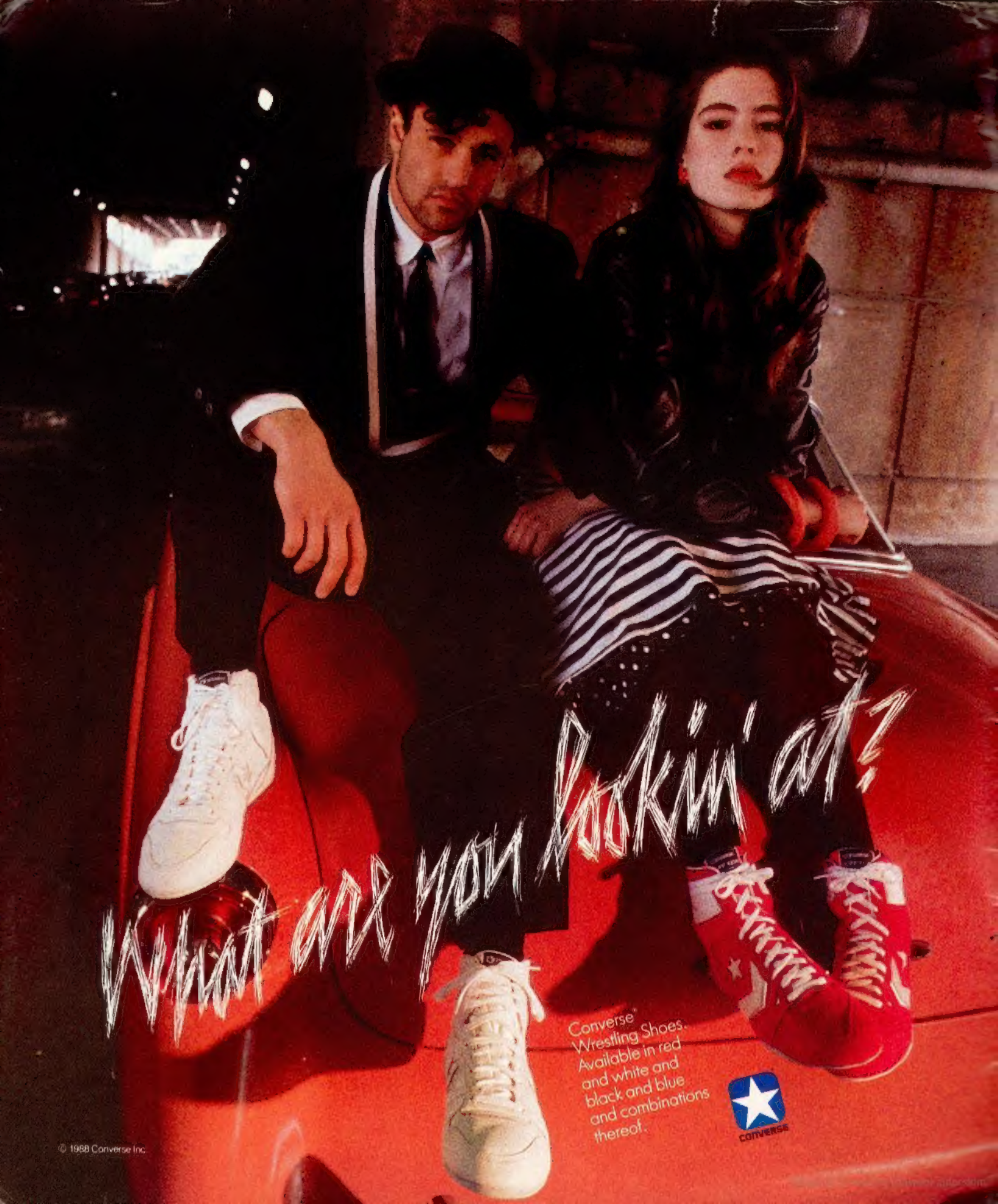
SATAN ON MAIN STREET

Death and Hysteria In a Small Town



MATT
GREENING


Material chronology provided by autorskim



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A black and white portrait of Toni Childs, looking slightly to the left with a contemplative expression. Her dark, wavy hair is pulled back, and she is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, top. The background is dark and out of focus.

Toni Childs poured herself
into her debut album.
And people noticed...

*"Childs delivers what Van Morrison
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immerse yourself and drift away."*

—STEVE POND, ROLLING STONE

*"Toni Childs is going for a long ride...
the music she makes from the rest of her
life should really be extraordinary."*

—JAY COCKS, TIME

*"(An) important debut record...
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in the current crop of releases with
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Among the most consistently engaging
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—TOM MOON, MIAMI HERALD

*"For anyone tired of formula pop,
welcome to Toni Childs. She offers
beautiful, sculpted songs sung with stout
heart and highly progressive vision.
These are songs of regeneration,
sung from the depth of the soul."*

—STEVE MORSE, BOSTON GLOBE

"A stunning debut!"

—BILL FLANAGAN, MUSICIAN

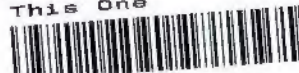
The Sound of an Individual

TONI CHILDS

UNION

This recording was made by
David Tickle, David Ricketts and Toni Childs

This One



SB92-TS9-GDQL



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His band wants him on stage.

Some thugs want his head.

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LOS LOBOS, GREEN ON RED, THE LAZY COWGIRLS, CHIP KINMAN & TONY KINMAN**

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Volume Four Number Five

August 1988

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TOPSPIN 6

POINT BLANK/Letters 10

FLASH

Spike Lee on Da Butt, Menudo goodies, Beastie Boy update, Wild Swans, Lita Ford, Ice-T, Missed Information, Pixies, *My TV Dinner With Ronnie* comic, *Undersized* rock stars. 12

THE BOOK OF SHADOWS

When a New Jersey teenager brutally murdered his mother and set fire to his house last winter, all signs indicated the hand of Satan. By Ed Kiersch. 22

DIRTY DANCING

The Monsters of Rock tour sported bigger stadiums and bigger hair, but the Dirty Dancing Tour was the real extravaganza of the summer of safe love. By Tama Janowitz. 27

GAY RAMBO

The first time was for his life. The second time was for his country. The third time is for a really cute young boy. By Taylor Mead. 30

MOODS FOR MILLIONS

Hairdressers at Sal's Hair Magic in Hollywood saw Depeche Mode at the Rose Bowl and concluded that the band played football like a bunch of wimps. This and other real life stories. By Scott Cohen. 32

ESCALATOR TO HEAVEN

Kingdom Come went from unknowns to platinum status just by playing great rock 'n' roll. Well, it helped that they sound just like Led Zeppelin. By Dan Hedges. 37

COMICS

These days, comics stores are infinitely more

exciting than record stores, even if you aren't a dweeb in highwater pants. 40

MOVING IMAGES

Everybody talks about bikers, but nobody wants to tell them about their breath. 52

WE ARE THE WORLD

Timbuk 3 earned a gold album for perhaps the world's least-understood anti-nuclear hit song. But at home in Austin, they get their message across just fine. By John Leland. 57

HOLDER OF A BOULDER

The story of the rap crew Boogie Down Productions is one of murder, homeless shelters, philosophy, and more talent than you have a right to expect. By John Leland. 60

AIDS

Notes from the Fourth International Conference on AIDS. By Celia Farber. 64

SPINS/Records

The Ramones, Chiefs of Relief, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Cher, Ohio Players, Grandmaster Flash, Camper Van Beethoven, Womack & Womack, Iggy Pop, Steve Coleman. 73

SINGLES 80

JAZZ 82

UNDERGROUND

Panther Burns, Honeymoon Killers, Giant Sand, Thin White Rope, Blur, 27 Devils Joking. 85

THE REAL MONSTERS OF ROCK

The heavy metal bands and the tour's portable outhouses: Both are hardworking and built to last. By Scott Cohen and Joe Spiegel. 90

TOP SPIN

The jet was in midflight when one of the engines suddenly exploded. Miraculously, the pilot was able to land the plane safely. When the first passenger came sliding down the emergency ramp, a reporter was standing there, knee deep in foam, with a microphone.

"Were you frightened, sir," she asked eagerly, "when the engine exploded up there?"

"No."

The reporter frowned.

"Sir, I said were you frightened up there when the engine exploded?"

"No, not really," the man repeated.

"Why not?"

"Because it exploded on the other side of the plane."

Most heterosexuals were on the other side when AIDS exploded. I remember my first close encounter with it four years ago. I had just returned to New York and was living with my boyfriend on 25th Street and 9th Ave. Our neighbors, Pierre and Matt, were the perfect couple. They had been together for nine years and were still blissfully in love.

I knew about AIDS, of course. Or rather, I had read about AIDS, but I didn't really *understand* it until I came home one night and found glass and blood all over the hallway. Pierre was dead. Matt was at the hospital getting 40 stitches in his hand from smashing the door. That night, I cried so hard I could barely breathe.

"It can't really be true," I sobbed. "What in the hell is going on?"

"Baby, relax," my boyfriend insisted. "We're not gonna get it. We are not going to die."

Calamities expose every nuance of human nature. Disaster strikes and suddenly society is forced to flex every muscle to find out where it's limp and where it's strong. We all take a spiritual inventory and see just how much of our make-up is courage and how much is cowardice—how much is greatness and how much is pettiness.

I've been asked, on occasion, to explain this magazine's, and my own, preoccupation with the subject of AIDS. A music and youth-culture magazine seems an unlikely place to find a regular column about a deadly epidemic. Some cynics were quick to suggest that we were exploiting the

public's fear of AIDS, masquerading as true humanitarians while secretly propelled by our journalistic egos, or even worse, magazine sales. Who were we, after all, to come crashing down on established scientific hypotheses such as that AIDS is caused by HIV?

So cynical is our society, that all expressions of compassion or awareness over anything that is threatening are not only unwelcome, but somehow distrusted.

Nobody gave me the sinister bottom line as bluntly as one of our editors, who said, "Our readers are mainly heterosexual. They don't have AIDS and they probably won't get it, so why should they care?" I couldn't believe my ears at first. I thought about it, and realized he wasn't just being cold, he was calling it like he saw it, and he was at least partially right.

AIDS didn't explode on "our side" of society. For a while, spurred on by the media, we feared it would, and consequently, we had some trauma. Our trauma, though, compared to theirs, was ridiculous. AIDS posed a possible threat to our free, frolicking sex lives. And what man in his right mind wanted to bother with condoms? Time passed, our HIV tests came back negative, our momentary anguish was lifted, and life went on. We had mild discomfort. They had excruciating pain. But do we feel for them? No. Maybe. Barely. Sometimes. Most of us, it seems, are benumbed to the reality of AIDS. We're sick of AIDS, quite frankly, we hip, healthy heterosexuals, and we say so with an arrogance only healthy people can afford.

In our attitudes, we breeze right by their holocaust. We know they're dying in scores, and it barely interests us. Just don't make us watch them die, some inner mechanism says, and we won't feel the full impact of their tragedy. Besides, they're not really like us. They have strange habits and they can't possibly feel things like we do.

Every twenty minutes, someone, somewhere in America dies of AIDS, at a median age of 36. Most urban homosexual men and IV drug users have, by now, lost count of how many friends have died of AIDS.

Six million Jews gassed while we played golf? How absurd. We're shocked by the barbarianism of a Hitler or a Stalin who masterminded mass death, yet relatively undisturbed

by our own and each other's complacency toward AIDS.

When Albert Camus wrote *The Plague* he used a plague as a metaphor for the Nazi war machine of World War II. "Society," he concluded, "always kills human beings coldly. Most death occurs by the condemnation of man by man."

When the story of AIDS is chronicled in our history books, there will be entire chapters on how our government ignored the epidemic.

Let's not let there be a footnote that says the rest of us did too.

—Celia Farber



Dr. Mohamed Abdel Aal



Scott Weiner/Reina

Top: SPIN's AIDS columnist Celia Farber and AIDS-virus "discoverer" Robert Gallo meet at last—in Sweden. Above: Depeche Mode—that's French for "hurry-up fashion." Right: Dance historian Spike Lee on the set of *School Daze*.



David Lee

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Kirstie Alley

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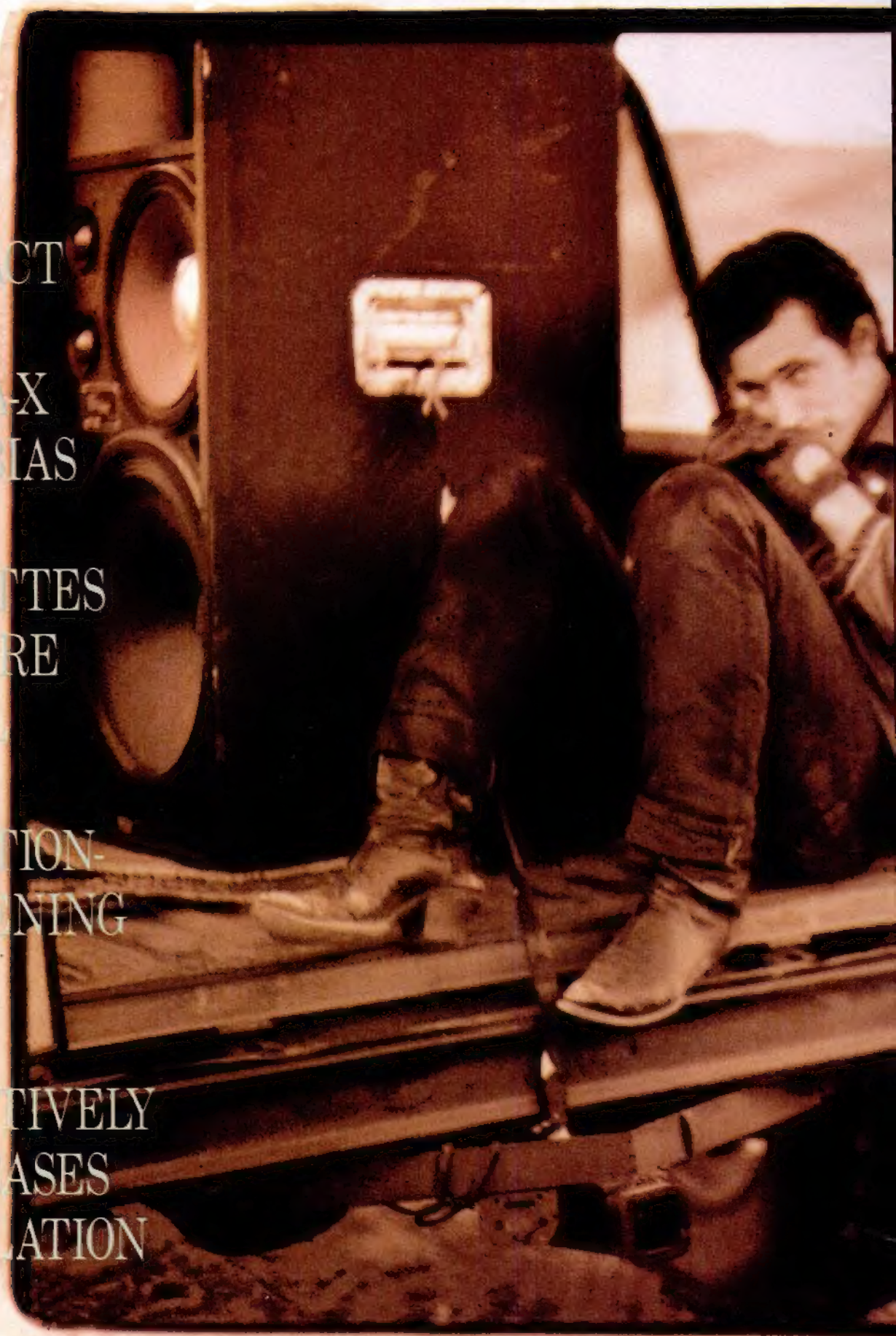


Cuervo

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MIX WITH CUERVO.

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SOME
LOVE
THE FACT
THAT
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HIGH BIAS
AUDIO
CASSETTES
FEATURE
A DUAL
LAYER
VIBRATION-
DAMPENING
SHELL
THAT
EFFECTIVELY
DECREASES
MODULATION
NOISE



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SOME

JUST

LOVE

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POINT BLANK

Letters

Gun fodder

If you didn't know any better, you would think Guns N' Roses [May] were just a bunch of drunk, strung out, obnoxious trouble-makers living in LA. At least, that's what every other magazine article I've read might lead you to believe. Then along came SPIN magazine and Bill Holdship; or should I say along came the best piece of no-hype and no-record-company-image-crap article I've read about the best damn band in the world today.

Evans Putnam
Greenville, SC

Adding insult to injury

I'm a guy who is torn up by this message ["Just Say No," June]. For all these beautiful people with all their pioneering to be remembered in such a sick way is too much. Their lives have made mine what it is and you have single-handedly insulted the inspirations of more than one generation. I understand that it's just speaking out against a very tactless movement against drugs, but to fight tactlessness you should use tact.

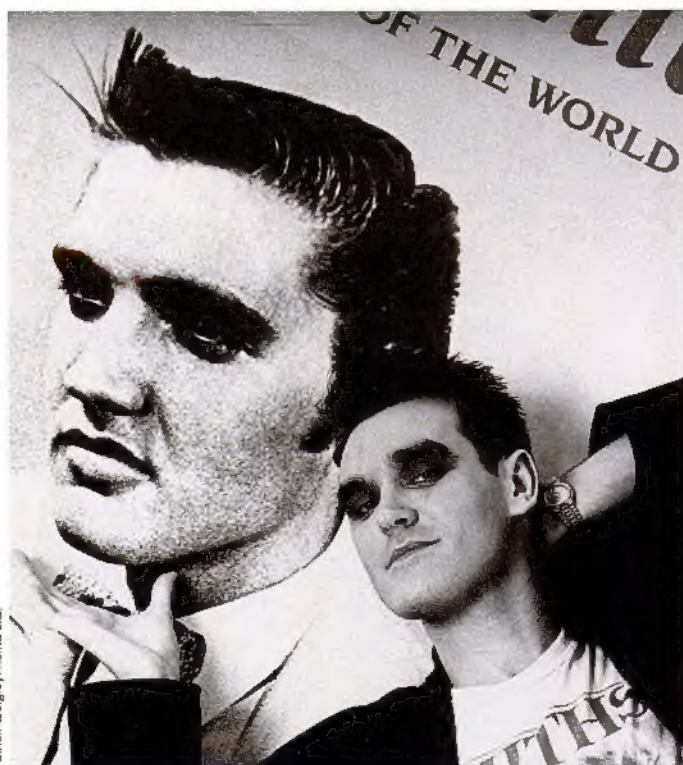
Sincerely with true love,
John Kendrick
Columbia, MO

I would like to tell Michael Corcoran that the article "Just Say No" had the tackiest captions I have ever read. The one under Jimi Hendrix makes me sick and Corcoran should be ashamed at himself. It is a shame that we lost artists like Jimi Hendrix, Buddy Holly, Mama Cass, etc., and these captions make fun of them and the way they died which is very disrespectful.

Anonymous
Los Angeles, CA

Hip hop you don't stop

If ever there was a perfect music article, it has to be John Leland's "Bring On the Night" [April]. Being an intense Latin hip hop (freestyle) music enthusiast, I found myself bewildered by the accuracy of the article which contained singers, songs, and clubs I have evolved



Morrissey: ponce or poet?

around since freestyle began to develop in early '86. I'm currently in the Army, stationed in Germany, and having . . . read such a great article through this magazine from afar is the best feeling. Bring on more freestyle articles.

Galo M. Erazo
Dexheim, Germany

I would like to give a great big "Bravo!" to your support of the rap industry in your Singles column and your article on Eric B. & Rakim [December]. So please, keep up the good work and continue writin' those articles on the top rappers 'cause we're sho' nuff readin' em!

Michael L. Byrd
Brooklyn, NY

Ode to Morrissey

It was nice to see Morrissey on the cover of your magazine. It was about time; Morrissey went unnoticed for almost five years of being an outstanding poet/songwriter. Unfortunately, Billy Altman's review

of *Viva Hate* was untimely in that it showed up only twenty-four pages after the article that commended Morrissey's brave lyrics. Altman tags Morrissey a rhythmless, one-dimensional singer and snickers with delight at his lyrics. It's always nice to see two sides of the story but as for this issue, I'll stick to the cover.

Elizabeth Fine
New York, NY

Some of my more stable and well-adjusted friends said that there was no Morrissey, only Smiths. The guy at the record store said, "Show them the June issue of SPIN and they will know the truth."

Billy Pacak
Belle Vernon, PA

Thank you for the Morrissey cover. Perhaps I am one of a small handful of people who believe that popular music as an art form is capable of much more than simply entertainment. With the resurgence of rock stars, long hair, guitar solos, and abysmal lyrics—everything that punk rebelled against—thank God there is a light that never goes out.

Oscar Wilde would be quite impressed with Morrissey's poetry.
John Slovacek
Denton, TX

Upon finishing your article on Morrissey, I've just got this to say: Jesus, and I thought Peter Gabriel was depressed. The Divine Mr. M's latest album should be called *Viva Enema*; that is all he needs to clear his head. His celibate pose in this age of AIDS may be commendable, but in the future, spare me the tragic existential bullshit, please. The issue was saved with your fine James Brown travelogue.

Mickey Ray Babicz
Geneva, IL

All Morrissey needs is a cheeseburger and a good fuck. And not necessarily in that order.

Anthony Gargiulo, Jr.
River Forest, IL

Mr. Precedent

As a reader of various rock rags over twenty years and a former music critic, I was quite impressed with Scott Cohen's "Forever Young" interview [June] with Neil Young. To my knowledge, this is the first time that anyone was clever enough to interview a rock star using his own lyrics as questions. I predict that you will see this technique copied by other writers in the future. Congratulations to Scott Cohen for being the first.

Patrick K. Long
Syosset, NY

Errata

Derek Ridgers, who took the Terence Trent D'Arby photo on page 44 of the June issue, is with London Features, not with Retna, Ltd.

The Rosie Vela photo on page 64 of the July issue was by Peter Kagan.

A photo on page 82 of the June issue identified as Sam Cooke was actually of Marvin Gaye, who is pictured twice on the same page.

Letters to the editor should include the writer's name, address, and daytime telephone number. All letters become the property of the magazine and will not be returned. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity by the mighty hand of SPIN.



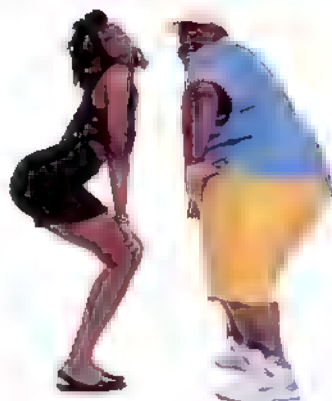
PHOTOS: Barry Harris DESIGN: Wow! Photo/Communication

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**SPIKE LEE'S
HISTORY OF
DA BUTT**

FLASH



I have always been fascinated by the way popular dances start. Who was the genius behind the Wop, the Cabbage Patch, Twist, Monkey, Prep, Patty Duke, Mashed Potato, Freak, Freddy Kruger, Funky Chicken, the Bump? Dances don't just appear out of thin air. And once someone makes one up, how does it get around? It's one of the mysteries of life.

During the preproduction of *School Daze*, in 1987, I knew I needed a dance for the film, so I came up with my own dance, Da Butt. It just came to me. I wanted to do a dance where the focus was on the two buttocks, the derriere, Da Butt. To be honest, there are a lot of other dances in Da Butt, so I can't say it's totally original. It has a lot of the Freak in it. There's a lot of different variations on Da Butt; you can improvise and make up your own moves. You can have a male and female looking away from each other, rubbing booties: that's the Butt-to-Butt version. The main thing is it moves when you dance.

I liked Marcus Miller's production on Luther Vandross's albums and Miles Davis's *Tutu*, so I asked him to do the song. When I ran the title by him, he said, "Da Butt," "Da Butt," what kind of title is that?" I told him I wanted it to sound like a really real party was going on in the

studio. When EU came to New York to record it, I brought about 30 friends into the studio to help with the call-and-response party, like "Tina got a big ole butt," and what not.

The *Wizard of Oz* is one of my favorite films. I must have seen it 92 times. I told Marcus I wanted to use that chant from the film, "Oh we oh, oh oh/Oh we oh, oh oh." It's called "The March of the Winkies," and it worked as a hook. Then while we were shooting *School Daze* in Atlanta, Prince's *Sign 'O' the Times* album came out. I was lying in bed, listening to the CD, when I heard that *Wizard of Oz* chant. I jumped out of bed screaming, "What the fuck is this? What the fuck is this? That Prince motherfucker is stealing my shit!" I even thought about pulling the chant, but I'm glad I didn't. I guess *The Wizard of Oz* is Prince's favorite film, too. Now, my brother Prince, whoddup on ya album cover *Lovesexy*, naked as a jailbird as my grandmother would say? Prince, what's the deal, what that be about? And the dickhead flower too. My man, you're buggin'.

When Marcus sent me a demo tape of "Da Butt," I knew it was a winner. But the same thing happened with the record that happened with the film. Columbia Pictures didn't push the movie, EMI/Manhattan didn't push "Da Butt." Whatever success *School Daze* had, it did it on its own, and it was the same with the record. "Da Butt" was a hit because it was a great record, not because it was promoted. The record company couldn't see a



go go record breaking outside of the D.C. area. They thought the guys in the group looked like hoodlums. It was like with *She's Gotta Have It*. The powers that be thought people would never go to an independent film that was all black and didn't have Eddie Murphy or Richard Pryor in it. With "Da Butt," they said the radio stations would never play



Da Butt, Menudo, Beastie Boy Update, Wild Swans, Lita Ford, Felt, Ice-T, Missed Information, Pixies, My TV Dinner with Ronnie, Pint-sized Rockers.



a go go record. They have these fixed concepts in their minds, and that's it. They never tried to say, "Maybe we'll be the first to get a go go record played." I had to go to record stores myself. Like at Tower Records, the record wasn't even on the main floor, it was upstairs with the soundtracks. I had to go in there, day after day, and get them to put it on the main floor. The *Good Morning, Vietnam* soundtrack was on the floor. This is stuff the record company should have done.

Now that the record is a hit, everyone wants to take credit for it. People sure can perpetrate, like they was down from the git-go. And we're also hearing flak from the handkerchief-head wearing, chicken-and-biscuit eating, positive-image Negroes, who say "Da Butt" is degrading to Black folks. It shows us as a people in an unfavorable light. Here we go again. "Da Butt" is just a throwback to our serious Funk Days, when the music was thump-

ing: a funk number about dancing, moving that butt (for those who have a butt to move). What's wrong with some butt shaking? Gimme da butt, gimme da butt. Am I talking too loud?

Do you want me to shaddup?

Gimme that girl With the big ole butt

Chaka Khan got a big ole butt, oh yeah

Aretha Franklin's got a big ole butt, oh yeah

Sade got a no no butt, oh yeah

Whitney's got a Jersey butt, big ole butt

Ya butt

Ya butt

I'll keep my mouth shut

How long will people be doing Da Butt? I don't know, probably until someone makes up the next new dance. I'm working on one—no, it's not called "Da Tit Tit," no truth to that rumor—for my next film, *Do the Right Thing*, which will be out next summer. But whoever invents the newest dance sensation across the nation, let's get that person's name, document it. I feel it's important.

—Spike Lee

When you get the notion, put your backfield in motion: Buify of the Fat Boys enjoys with Angela perhaps the finest moment of his life.





Scott Heiser

The first thing you notice about the mid-Manhattan store are the girl dolls in the window. Hundreds of them sitting there with their backs to you, arms by their sides, posed in play worship. And it gets weirder. As the "girls" move closer to the stage, they become more animated, going wild for the guys on the shoebox podium, a few of them trying to scramble up there in frenzied doll bliss.

And what are the objects of all this playful adoration?

Well, what has had 18 members, is in a state of perpetual puberty, and can't last once it's voice has changed? Give up? No, it's not some sex-crazed mutant amoeba concocted in a genetics lab, but you're getting warm. It's Menudo, those lovable, laughable, Latin Monkees. And here in MENUKITIS, the largest Menudo memorabilia shop in North America, those pre-fab four hundred have, through the magic of merchandising, been transformed into Barbie-sized dolls lounging on the stage in various cute poses.

This summer, the "real" Menudos are celebrating their galo ten-year anniversary with a huge blow-out in Puerto Rico. We here at SPIN believe this to be an occasion for some heavy introspection, so we spent the day with the dolls at MENUKITIS reflecting on this landmark event in rock 'n' roll history. While we were standing around, admiring the

lunchboxes, records, videos, etc., of Ricky, Oscar, Nefly, Fernando, Carlos, Ray, Charlie, Roy, Johnny... paying tribute to all those who came before by silently singing, "Where have all the Menudo's gone, short time passing..." into the store walked a pre-teen female fan to buy a poster of Salsa, this summer's screen wet dream starring ex-Menudo member Robby Rosa.

"How many times have you seen Menudo?"

She tore herself away from the poster of the bronze boy, her braces catching a reflection off the setting sun bouncing in the window, and said a bit sheepishly, "I've never seen them, yet."

"You know if they can stay together just ten more years, they'll beat out the Rolling Stones as the dinosaurs of rock."

"Who's that?" she asked, but before waiting for an explanation, she was back gazing at the poster.

"Did you know that if it wasn't for Menudo, Johnny Carson would have been short over a thousand jokes this decade?"

She didn't answer.

"Did you know that your favorite Menudo of 1998 was probably just conceived last week?"

She turned towards me and grinned. "Well, at least when he comes along I'll have my braces off."

—Legs McNeil

YAKETY YAK

"A group photo of the top ten journalists in America on any given day would be a monument to human ugliness."

—Hunter S. Thompson

"Why can't I be remembered for something else—that I had a dog named Napoleon and we used to go to the Farmers Market every week and eat pizza?"

—Jodie Foster

"If I'd known it was going to turn out like this, I might have said no to Jesus."

—Mother Teresa

BEASTIE

Beastie

There'll never be another Beastie Boys album. Or so the English music tabloid *New Musical Express* announced on its April 2nd cover, attributing this intelligence to the Beasties' producer and record company president, Rick Rubin.

The item, happily, turns out to be bogus. "Rick found out that we were approaching other record labels," says Adam Yauch, or MCA, "and he figured the best way to throw a monkey wrench into the works was to say that the band was about to break up, or was broken up." The Beasties are currently at work on the follow-up to their five million-selling *Licensed to Ill*; if they can settle their record company disputes, they hope to have a single out this summer and an album by Christmas. "I'm pretty excited about it," says Yauch. "It'll be like the last one, only on another level."

In the meantime, Adam Horowitz, the King Ad-Rock, has made a movie with *Christie's Fire* director Hugh Hudson, due out this winter. Mike D (Diamond) has been playing drums in the heavy blues band Big Fat Love, and Yauch has put together Brooklyn, an aggregate of his favorite musicians: Daryl Jenifer from the Bad Brains on bass, Doug Thompson from Murphy's Law on drums, and Tom Cushman, co-author of SPIN's Beastie Boy cover story, on guitar. Yauch plays guitar and sings.

"The Beastie Boys started out as a band," Yauch says, "and it feels good to get back to that, just playing guitar and chilling. I love to rap, but after a while, you get to want to do something else. At the end of the Beastie Boys tour, we'd been doing the same show for eight months, trying to find something new in it to make it exciting. This is it. I've been doing this for eight months now. Maybe that's why I'm so excited about the next Beastie Boys album."

"The difference between the Beastie Boys and Brooklyn is that the Beastie Boys would sneak into Chuck Eddy's room and throw ice water on him. With Brooklyn, Doug would probably just throw up on him."

—J. McFarland



Brooklyn: (L-R) Daryl Jenifer, Doug Thompson, Adam Yauch, Tom Cushman.

Dorothy Law



THE REFRESHES

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FLASH

CALL OF THE WILD SWANS



ou've got to have a strong will to survive in Liverpool," says vocalist Paul Simpson, "a driving will to rise out." The Wild Swans maintain a spirit to overcome a city which appears mystical to outsiders, but is in truth oppressive and decaying; *Bringing Home the Ashes* (Sire) is the tangible form of their will, guided by Simpson's penetrating voice. Their songs seem powerfully fragile, echoing distantly with a melancholy laugh, then gliding just overhead.

Years ago, Simpson missed his last train home, stumbled into a backstreet bar and was captivated not by the music but by a feeling of belonging. And the Wild Swans—three kids playing in Liverpool pubs, writing songs reflecting their alienation while striving to belong—were born. Soon (the strain of their efforts too great), the young and volatile group split up to pursue other projects, then reformed after accidentally playing together again in Liverpool. "We're all happy now," says the utterly polite Simpson, "feel like we're doing something serious. Our hearts are in it."

"Music is not as important to youth culture as it was," he observes, saying rock 'n' roll has become a career like anything else. "I'm a great reader. I'd rather read a good book than listen to an LP any day. But good music—classical, opera, folk music, whatever—transcends time. We're headed in that direction."

Though the band has been well received—even when wearing overcoats onstage while opening for their longtime friends Echo and the Bunnymen, during England's coldest winter in a hundred years—there have been misunderstandings. In France, the promoters didn't understand the name Wild Swans; The poster read, *First There Was Sique Sique Sputnik—Now, From Liverpool, England—the Walls Whams, the Band for the 1990's*. "So we got really weird people expecting pink fur kneeless boots," Simpson recalls. "They didn't like us. . . . But even when it goes badly, it's preferable to sitting in the pub drinking a pint of Guinness. It's a massive release of energy."

The album's not yet been released in the UK, but these seemingly ethereal creatures, these Wild Swans, have not been killing time. They've written nearly half the next LP and today, says Simpson, "it's payday. We didn't rehearse, we've all been on a little spend." He bought some Italian postcards, *Never Mind the Bollocks* on cassette, some Youth Culture comics, and a black T-shirt, declaring, "We're not as serious as we might seem."

There is the keen sense of humor, the polite manner, and the intention, Simpson offers, "to inspire in any way . . . someone possibly hearing something in the lyrics and thinking, 'Oh, I'm not the only one.' To inspire on all levels." And in the end there is Liverpool, "the edge that it gives you, that you can never really lose."

—Christian Logan Wright



Wild Swans: (L-R) Joseph Fearon, Jeremy Kelly, Paul Simpson

Courtesy Sire Records



Greg Wakeham

LITA

It's a slow night at the Redwood Room, a shot-and-beer North Hollywood hole in the wall where blue collar types, in heavy work boots and with dirt under their nails, stop by to quench their thirst. Lita Ford's also stopped by for a quick shot of Jack Daniels after rehearsal. But the locals aren't quite sure what to make of the blonde who's got a dragon-wrapped-around-a-guitar tattoo protruding from her tank top.

Not that she's worrying about what they think. With her new LP, *Lita*, at press time in *Billboard's* top thirty, the 29-year-old guitarist is finally making things happen—and finding success on her own terms.

And if that includes a poster where she's naked behind a strategically placed B.C. Rich guitar, so be it! Because that's the way Ford wants it: "I think a 14-year-old boy would love that."

You see, what Ford wants is control: of her career, her image, her music—things the Runaways couldn't dream of. Back in the Seventies, it was Kim Fowley who called the shots, packaging them as jailbait rockers and putting 'em onstage in hot pants and corsets to play fast, furious power chords as they sang about nasty sex, nasty boys, and nasty girls.

"I was very frustrated and very angry all the time. We all were, but we didn't know why—which may be why we drank so much," Ford recalls. "I used to sit on fire escapes after concerts and cry. I was so frustrated, I'd yell, 'Fuck!' and people used to yell at me, 'Now Lita, don't drink. Don't do this, don't do that. Why can't you just mellow out?'"

Rather than mellow, the Runaways flamed out (in 1979), making the girls has-beens at the tender age of 21, after six glorious years of trash metal. Rebuilding has been a slow process for Ford, whose first solo LPs, *Out for Blood* and *Dancing on the Edge*, sold slowly.

Along the way, she's been romantically linked to Motley Crue's Nikki Sixx ("We were so poor, I paid for his first two tattoos because he didn't have the money") and Black Sabbath's Tony Iommi, and is currently involved with W.A.S.P. guitarist Chris Holmes.

"In some ways, making it in this business is like a wall," she says. "Being a woman, I felt like I had to get over it! I felt like I had to get over it because I am a woman."

"You either get over it or you die or you sit on your ass! And I didn't want to die or sit on my ass."

—Holly Gleason

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ONFESSIONS OF A POP GROUP



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FLASH

30 YEARS OF DIRTY PEOPLE

No doubt about it. Lawrence, lead singer/writer of the English band Felt, has the cleanest kitchen of any musician this side of Iceland. He stands leather-capped and proud among his gleaming tea kettles and appliances, for all the world like the dental assistant his mother always hoped he'd become.

"Journalists don't expect people in bands to be clean. They're used to thirty years of dirty people. But I can't stand anything out of place."

This obsession with order finds its way into Felt's music, which merges the dark guitar moods of Television and the early Velvet Underground with the cheerful catchiness of, uh, Sergio Mendes and Brazil '66.

Gold Mine Trash, a compilation recently released in the States, is a solid introduction to the early development of the Felt sound—a mosaic of jangly guitars backed by a bubbling Sixties-style Hammond organ, steady backbeat, and Lawrence's breathy, deadpan vocals, the sound of a choirboy learning to sing along to Lou Reed records.

"When I write songs, it's always subconscious, it just comes straight out without any planning. I use all sorts of imagery—religious- and art-related. And anything that's ancient, Ancient imagery. If it has meaning, I find out about it afterwards."

Although virtually unknown in the U.S., Felt have been underground favorites on the U.K. scene for years, securely tucked into the indie niche with fellow travellers the Cactus Twins, who, like Felt, have opted for total artistic control over mass marketing.

"The main thing to stress is that we're not part of the mainstream and don't want to be. It's not lack of motivation, it's looking after ourselves. Creation [Felt's U.K. label] doesn't want to hear demos or anything. They just trust us to do whatever we want."

"We're making a Super-8 film of all my favorite buildings in Birmingham, where we live. Just shots of buildings interspersed with me miming some of the songs on our new album, *The Pictorial Jackson Review*. And we're starting a book publishing company, doing a series of paperbacks. So I can put my OWN book alongside of *Christiane F. Or Andy Warhol's From A to B and Back Again*. I might put it next to that."

Any other obsessions?

"Uh, cleanliness and tidiness."

—Donna Raniere



Felt (l-r) Mick Bund, Lawrence, Martin Duffy, Gary Ange



Donna Raniere

Ice-T is pissed at the critics of the movie *Colors*. Bursting from his seat, pacing, prancing, and doing little jive steps, Ice-T rips into a non-rhyming rap about the people who misread *Colors*' intentions, who called it sensational, or violence-glorifying, or "too white." "[The movie] shows whites as the assholes they can be. I told Hopper I thought the film was weak but straight."

Ice-T's incensed that people don't understand that he once lived in the ghetto, that he went to South Crenshaw High in the early Seventies, when gangs really fought over turf and tags, before big business drugs became the basis of the L.A. street wars. "I want you to dislike me," Ice-T says, not quite to me personally, "that's why I wear this gold gun around my neck. But it's a peace symbol." The medallion swings across his muscled chest; then he sits down.

Ice-T's L.A. pad is a black paradise—black walls, long black leather couches, thick black shag rug, big black TV monitor with tall black speaker columns on either side, the whole unit rising up like the monolith in 2001. It's that awesome. T himself looks like a long in the middle of it all, flanked by Donald D., a rapper buddy from the Bronx, and Kevin, a friend. Darlene, T's girlfriend, in a stretch mini, politely crosses her legs over on the bed.

"I didn't start out working on the film. Hopper asked me to score some of the soundtrack after he heard my 'Squeeze the Trigger.'"

The title track of *Colors*, Ice-T's own, is a stuttering, sputtering, heavy-hitting tirade about gang war, power, and identity. Its relentless downbeat gives the backbone to the bleak vision of dead-end violence *Colors* depicts.

"Two years ago there was a chance to stop the gangs, now I don't think so. But I want the violence to stop," he says. Moments later, a friend calls up to give T details on the funeral arrangements for a buddy shot dead in the street a week before. A black Uzi hangs on the wall. He says it's real.



ICE-T AND NO SYMPATHY

Juergen Kalbs

His first LP, *Rhyme Pays*, has been criticized for violence of a different sort: for sexism, for homophobic phrasemaking, for lyrics like "Females possess the one commodity/That no man will ever have, no man that hangs around me" and "If females are one thing that you don't need/Well, you better get away from me at a high rate of speed/If you don't like them, you must like men/And whoa, boy, that's where our serious problems begin." Ice-T is unabashed: "They ask me, you don't like women? I say, look, I write in the first-person, but I'm an actor. It's not derogatory. Unfortunately this is how brothers talk. [They didn't] 'make love' [to her], [they] 'fucked the shit out of her.' Oh yeah, I'm semi-married, married as far as I'm concerned, with Darlene for four years."

Ice-T started what he called the Rhyme Syndicate before he had a chance to get a record deal. "I got all my friends together... then I ended up getting signed by Sire. It was a lucky deal. My boys said, 'Ice, you left us.' 'Ice-T, you used to be.' But Warners had also approached me, before I was signed, so I asked them, 'How about the Rhyme Syndicate?' It worked out, we have a profit-sharing deal, I put all ten, including Donald D., Bronx-style B, Kid Jazzy, and Domination" on the upcoming Rhyme Syndicate LP. Ice-T's new Sire LP is due soon, and he and his gang are planning some live shows.

"It's theater, it's power, and it's spectacle. When we go onstage we've got champagne, we're throwing money—we have a 50-foot Uzi that hangs over the stage. I want to be known for what I've done, not what I've got. Give us a chance. We've got to do it our own way."

"I was told I'd never get over, 'cause I live in L.A. with palm trees, you know. [Ice-T moved to L.A. from the East Coast after his parents' deaths in the early Seventies.] But back East, they said, don't stop. Rap will hit big so stay with it. So I chugged and chugged." You know he's chugging.

—Barbara O'Dair

INFORMATION

MISS

Michael Jackson's request for a private audience with **the Pope** was turned down. The reason behind Jackson's request, **we can only surmise**, is that he wants to buy the **Shroud of Turin**. ▲ **Dead Man's Pop** is the tentative title of the new **Replacements** LP. ▲ A survey conducted by Waldenbooks reveals that the kids of America regard **Pee-wee Herman** and **Mike Dukakis** as equally qualified to be **president**. ▲ Two of the three **Beastie Boys** can't drive a stick-shift. ▲ The Screen Actors Guild (**SAG**) has notified **John Waters**, the director of **Pink Flamingos** and **Hairspray**, that he can't appear on screen under his own name, even when playing himself in his own movies. The reason: there's already an actor registered as John Waters (whom you've seen in flicks like *The Scalp Merchant*, *Demolition*, and *Cass*). Waters told SPIN: "I'm not changing my name so I think they'll put me in **SAG jail**. It should be a lot of fun because it's probably filled with lots of

unemployed actors." ▲ Art-lover **Jon Bon Jovi** bought two \$5,000 paintings at a Manhattan gallery but forgot to pick them up. ▲ **Elvis Presley** is alive and well and living in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Louise Welting, a Kalamazoo housewife, claims she's seen the King twice within the last year, most recently when he was leaving the Kalamazoo **Burger King**. The time before was at a grocery store check-out line. Fans will be glad to know Elvis has lost weight and cut his sideburns. ▲ **Beat on the Brat Dept.**: On the videotape an ex-girlfriend sold to New York's Channel Five, convicted killer **Robert Chambers** dons a wig and imitates **Joey Ramone** singing, while "Rockaway Beach" plays in the background. ▲ Thanks to the food industry, over 5,000 chickens will be killed in the time it takes to read this page. ▲ **Alpha Blondy** recently played three nights at a Paris club for the fee of **\$35,000** per night. On the first night, Blondy demanded **cash up front**, then went back to his hotel to count it. By the time he finished counting the bundle, he was **two hours late** for the show. ▲ Some of the items auctioned off at Sotheby's to benefit the **T.J. Martell Foundation for Leukemia, Cancer, and AIDS Research**: a **Madonna autographed bustier** (and a picture of her wearing it), a framed **Tony Bennett** oil painting of **Frank Sinatra**, sneakers autographed by **Run-D.M.C.**, and **Lou Reed's** handwritten lyrics to "Walk on the Wild Side." ▲ On Sept. 9-10, four **Austin** venues will hold shows to raise money for the survivors of the two earthquakes that hit **Mexico City** three years ago. **Joe Ely**, **John Prine**, and other musicians will perform. ▲ **Al Green** hasn't given up gospel, but he's re-entering **the world of pop music**. At New Orleans' famed Jazz & Heritage Festival, he played a tight set that mixed his **old hits** ("Let's Stay Together," "I'm So Tired of Being Alone," "Take Me to the River," "Belle") with his **gospel** and **religious** songs. This marks the first time in nearly eight years that Green has sung his old R&B tunes.



Lib. Wagner/ONYX

SAG prison escapee John Waters on the loose in Manhattan

PIXILATED

If Jim Morrison and Roky Erickson had been a Brill Building songwriting duo, they might have dreamed up a group as sweet-nasty-strange as the Pixies, and if Jimmy Page had produced their record it might sound as whumpingly swell as *Surfer Rosa* (Rough Trade). As it is, *Surfer Rosa* was produced by Big Black's Steve Albini, and its snarling-punk-pop songs concern neither incest (that stuff's on the Boston quartet's EP *Came On Pilgrim*) nor gremlins (despite their name, which, like lots of stuff with this band, sounds cool and not very punk and doesn't mean shit), but the Pixies' songs are mostly about bones breaking, bodies falling apart, and minds free-floating through surreality.

SPIN: How did you first meet Steve Albini?

Black Francis: When we picked him up at the airport.

SPIN How did the arrangements get made?

Black Francis: 4AD [their U.K. label] did that. We didn't have much to say about it. We could have said no, but they said, "How about Steve Albini?" And we said, "Sure. Who's Steve Albini?"

Black Francis ("a family name"; real name: Charles), a self-described "Type A personality, cruising for angina," is a rock obsessive who decided to drop out of school and form a band with a college friend (Joey Santiago, guitar), a bass player (Mrs. John Murphy, a family name; real name: Kim) they found through a newspaper ad, and a drummer (David Lovering) who worked at a Rad-a-Shack with Mrs. John Murphy's husband.

Being the greatest band in the world, the Pixies are pretty much capable of anything from sheet metal guitar to plain, seriously melodic rock 'n' roll (sometimes sung in Spanish). Black Francis describes their new single, "Here Comes Your Man," as "BoDeans-ish" (and he's right), but mostly they make twitchy, m-sane rock that trips over itself a lot. That's Black Francis' definition of a good song: something, and you don't know what, that sounds great and DOES SOMETHING to you, like, you know, Iggy Pop.

SPIN: You're not one of those anti-song bands that fuck with the notion of songs with a lot of noise. One thing about the Pixies is you have really good songs as songs.

Black Francis: Yeah. It's nice to have space. How much can one brain deal with?

—J. Allen Levy



for Bursch

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THEN WE RETIRED TO THE COMMAND CENTER WITH BRANDY
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IT WAS AN INFORMAL GATHERING WITH JUST A FEW OF THE PRESIDENT'S OLDEST BUDDIES. FRANK DEAN, SAMMY, MICHAEL JACKSON, HENNY YOUNGMAN, FORMER SUPREME COURT NOMINEE JUDGE HARDY AND HIS SON ANDY, JOHN WAYNE, PAT O'BRIEN, AND AUNT EMM...



AFTER COCKTAILS WE ALL SAT AROUND WITH T.V. DINNERS AND
WATCHED THE SANDS OF TWO LIMA ... DESSERT? JELLY BEAN CAKE.

...THE PRESIDENT HANDED OUT GUNS AND WE PLAYED "ARMY"
IN THE CORRIDORS OF THE WHITE HOUSE TIL DAWN! FOM!



LATER THAT MORNING I TOOK THE SHUTTLE HOME, AND WHEN I GOT THERE I WOKED UP MY WIFE AND TOLD HER ALL ABOUT OUR FAREWELL TV DINNER WITH RONNIE.

ANOTHER DAN LED / DEAN POWDER PRODUCTION

Like
TALL,
handsome
ROCK
STAR

WALKED INTO THE ROOM

[illegible]

THE GEORGIA SATELLITES



OPEN ALL NIGHT

The band never quits. The music never stops.

OPEN ALL NIGHT the second album from The Georgia Satellites.

Featuring "Sheila," "My Baby," "Down and Down," and "Open All Night."

Produced by Jeff Glixman

THE SOUTH IS GONNA DO IT AGAIN...ON ELEKTRA CASSETTES, COMPACT DISCS AND RECORDS.

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The Tulliam home in the Oak Ridge area of Jefferson Township, where a young man and his mother were killed in a murder-suicide. The house was later burned down.

Murder-suicide sparks satan TV talk

By Laine Hoffman
Staff Writer



Police close case, await autopsy reports

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP, N.J. — The murder-suicide of a young man and his mother last week has sparked a growing interest in satanism among teenagers.

SAID SATURDAY NIGHT, AT THE TULLIAM HOME, A YOUNG MAN AND HIS MOTHER WERE KILLED IN A MURDER-SUICIDE. THE CASE HAS SPARKED A GROWING INTEREST IN SATANISM AMONG TEENAGERS.

Authorities on Wednesday closed their

investigation into the murder-suicide case. The police are waiting for autopsy reports. The case has sparked a growing interest in satanism among teenagers.

Magic tale of classmate

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Occult



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Reverend Richard Reno gathers a talk on satanism at the Mount Zion Church in Springfield Township. About 200 people attended.

Hundreds turn up for talk on occult

Teen's rampage cited for interest

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP, N.J. — Hundreds of people gathered at the Mount Zion Church in Springfield Township last night for a talk on satanism. The talk was held in response to the murder-suicide of a young man and his mother last week.

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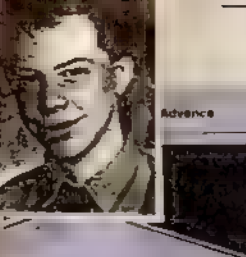
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Thomas Sullivan Jr., the young man whose murder-suicide with his mother last week has sparked a growing interest in satanism among teenagers.

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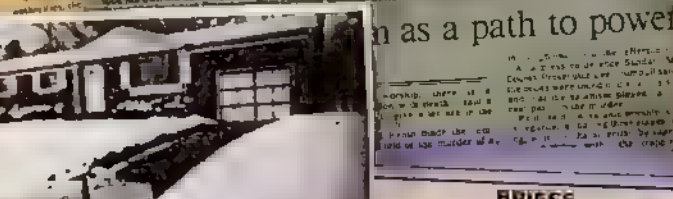
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The Tulliam home in the Oak Ridge area of Jefferson Township, where a young man and his mother were killed in a murder-suicide. The house was later burned down.

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SATANISM

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The Book of Shadows

In the coldest weeks of last winter, a series of bizarre events brought death, Satan, and hysteria to a small New Jersey town.

Standing in a Catholic school hallway dominated by crucifixes and talk of Ozzy Osbourne, Tommy Sullivan told his friends about his plan

"Satan came to me last night in a dream," the eighth grader whispered. "He had my face. He was carrying a knife and he told me to 'preach satanism to other kids, then kill everyone in your family.' "

Tommy Sullivan looked right at his friends and said, "I'm going to do this."

In the classrooms and hallways of the Reverend George Brown School in Sparta, New Jersey, Tommy was considered a likeable kid. He had a little trouble fitting in, which was attributed to the fact that he commuted from nearby Jefferson Township, and he didn't have a girlfriend. His grades were good, though, and he'd made the wrestling team, competing at the 123-pound class. Still, in the last few months, and especially since returning from Christmas break one week earlier, Tommy had been drinking a little more regularly and acting very strange.

Unsure of how seriously to take Tommy's threat, his classmates measured their friend's words against his recent odd behavior and reported it to the school principal, Sister Philomena Fleck. The next day, after receiving a number of reports from teachers that he was passing notes with satanic messages to other students, she called in Tommy's mother for a conference.

Sister Philomena had never been one to take the devil lightly, but a recent series of events in this heavily wooded, rural region of northern New Jersey had heightened her concern. First there was the report of a botched burglary attempt at Our Lady of the Mountain Church, said to have been the work of a cult in search of religious artifacts. Then, last October, police found that a group of some 20 teenagers were holding satanic rituals at the nearby St. Joseph Mission camp. Filled with devil-worship markings, and satanic symbols and messages, the long abandoned site had evidently become a gathering place for occult ceremonies. In the middle of the investigations, several of the buildings were burned to the ground. One by one, each of the surrounding communities was reporting some sort of

bizarre activity, from cult-like chicken sacrifices to the suicide of a young student who was practicing witchcraft. And now, apparently, such troubles had come to her doorstep.

Ironically, it was Sister Philomena who had given Tommy's teacher permission to allow a group of students to prepare a report on satanism that had such a tremendous impact on the fourteen-year-old. Last November, when that report was delivered, Tommy strode to the front of the room and denounced it in a voice ringing with repulsion. "Satanism is the total opposite of Catholicism," he said. "These groups break into Catholic churches, burn black candles, destroy furniture, preach about nasty happenings, and include disgusting orgies in their masses. I believe this religion is much too scary and weird for me."

That Thursday, last January 7, Sister Philomena, who is open about the fact that the *The Exorcist* made a powerful impression on her, shared her concerns with Tommy's 37-year-old mother, Bettyanne. "Tommy's too young and impressionable to be exposed to this," she told her. "He's even alarmed the other children." Later, Tommy sat in that same office and assured both his mother and Sister Philomena that his fascination with the Devil would end. A baby-faced youngster who mowed his neighbors' lawns and delivered newspapers, he was easy to believe. Still, Bettyanne promised that she and Tom, Sr., would have a talk with Tommy. And maybe the Sullivans would attend the forum on satanism that a group of concerned parents and clergy were going to conduct exactly one week later, in response to the recent rash of incidents.

That Saturday, Tom and Bettyanne Sullivan sat their oldest son down to straighten him out once again. Lately, Tommy's odd behavior had been giving them fits. But Satan? The two of them agreed that growing pains, not the Devil, had a hold on their son. So as they huddled inside their modest Jefferson Township house, 35 miles west of New York City, they wanted to believe him.

"Don't worry, it's all under control," Tommy told his parents. "Forget it, it's all over. Finished. You can count on it."

What Tommy didn't tell them was that he was

"Most of us used the woods as a sort of lover's lane, but not Tommy. We'd see him in there at all hours of the night, walking around or looking at the water. It was strange."

keeping a special book, a spiral notebook with a hard, cardboard cover that came to be known as "The Book of Shadows." Here, Tommy expressed the feelings he otherwise kept inside. The book was filled with drawings of sadistic rituals and omnipotent, devilish-looking creatures. There were also Tommy's heroes, Billy Idol, Twisted Sister, and others. Portrayed as fiends holding *de rigueur* inverted crosses, they appeared next to devils with severed hands and misshapen faces. One drawing is entitled: "Come to Satan." But the most frightening illustration is that of a demonic figure holding an upsidown cross, looking on as a woman lying prostrate on a slab is lowered by pulleys into a sea of fire.

To diffuse some of the tension that gripped his household, Mr. Sullivan forgot about his bad cold and took Tommy to a wrestling match at the nearby high school. Preoccupied with his work, he'd been somewhat distant lately, but it was like him to make this effort. Bettyanne was the one who ran the house with an iron hand. She was a strict disciplinarian who was set in her ways. But this Saturday she, too, was in a forgiving mood.

That evening, Bettyanne took Tommy and his 10-year-old brother Brian to the Saturday mass at Our Lady of the Lake Church. A devout Catholic, she was encouraged to see him following the service and carefully choring the words. He was behaving as innocently as he had when he was Brian's age. With the Lord's help, she figured, this strange crisis would pass.

That night his parents didn't question Tommy any further. But as he excused himself and headed for the downstairs den to watch *Friday the 13th* on the VCR, Bettyanne admonished him sternly not to stay up late because she wanted everyone back at church for the early morning services. Bettyanne's dominant role in the household could be maddening. But this time, while the rest of the family headed off toward an early bed, Tommy simply muttered to himself, shrugged his shoulders, and slouched toward the basement rec room.

A short time later, Brian stumbled out of his bed to go to the bathroom, and found his older brother wandering in the hallway.

"What're you doin', Tommy?" Brian remembers asking. "Why ya standin' around? I thought you were watching Jason on the VCR."

"Get back to bed. Hurry. Just go to your room," snorted Tommy, looking away from Brian toward his parents' room. "It's late. Go to sleep, do you hear me?"

Except for the wind rattling against the window panes, the house was silent. It was barely 10 o'clock. Brian, figuring that everyone else was asleep, started back to his bedroom—to the door carrying the giant poster of Freddy from *Nightmare on Elm Street* and the words, "Don't come into my room or I'll kill you." He hesitated in the hallway, though, when he noticed how much Tommy was sweating. His older brother seemed nervous, differ-

ent from usual. Before opening his bedroom door, he saw that Tommy's right hand was covered with blood.

Later that night, at about 10:30, Tommy's father was jarred from his sleep by the sharp ring of a smoke alarm. He ran to the living room to find the couch in flames and junk scattered everywhere. Quickly extinguishing the fire, he and Brian began their search for the rest of their family. At the front door Mr. Sullivan saw his car rolling down the driveway and into a snowbank across the street. He chased after it but, finding it empty, went on to his neighbor Fred Eastman's home, where he interrupted a small party to call the police. With Eastman, he returned to his house to continue the search. Minutes later, they made their grotesque discovery at the foot of the steep basement stairs.

When Detective Paul Hart entered the Sullivan's blue ranchhouse at 82 White Rock Boulevard in the section of Jefferson Township known as Milton, he recognized the heavy, musty odor of newly-spilt blood. Hart and his partner, Ken Pielich, followed the scent downstairs to the family's playroom. There, they saw it splattered everywhere: sprayed across Monopoly sets, clothes, weightlifting equipment. Already small pools had begun to congeal, some of them flecked with bits of cut flesh. Lying in a crumpled heap amid the disarray, Bettyanne was little more than a mottled mass of blood, exposed bone and tissue. Her hands were partially severed and her throat was slit from the windpipe nearly to the spinal chord. But it was her face that made the two detectives turn away. With several dozen thrusts of a knife, the killer had tried to gouge her eyes out, then sliced the surrounding flesh the way a hunter skins a wild animal.

"It's the most brutal thing I've ever seen," Paul Hart told himself. A Vietnam vet who'd helicoptered into the DMZ during the Tet Offensive, the 41-year-old detective could only grope for an explanation.

Tommy, meanwhile, was nowhere to be found. As Hart moved through the house, it became increasingly clear that the 14-year-old was involved in the killing. Sifting through the ashes of the living room fire, they discovered partially burned books on satanism that he had borrowed from the local library, including one titled *The Picture Book of Devils, Demons and Witchcraft*. Inside Tommy's room, there were more such books, along with a collection of crude satanic drawings and diagrams. On the wall was a small bedside crucifix that was dwarfed by his posters of Ozzy Osbourne and a maniacally grinning Alice Cooper. As they learned more, Hart and Pielich attached some symbolism to this, reading it as the conflict between Bettyanne's strict Catholicism and Tommy's rebellious turn to the demonic forces which had obviously won out.

Outside, where the family's Mercury was parked backward into a snowbank, they found more of Tommy's personal belongings. In his panicked attempt to flee, Tommy Sullivan couldn't handle the car that he was too young to drive. Abandoning it, he left behind some clothes, papers, and an inverted cross that dangled from a necklace. The most dramatic piece of evidence the detectives turned up, though, was Tommy Sullivan's "pact" with Satan.

"To the Greatest Demons of Hell, I Tommy Sullivan, would like to make solemn exchange with you. If you give me the most extreme of all magical powers . . . I will kill many Christian followers who are serious in their beliefs . . ."

Tommy went on to reveal his intention to kill his father and Brian, then continued, "Exactly 20

years from this day I promise to commit suicide. I will tempt all teenagers on earth to have sex, have incest, do drugs, and to worship you. I believe that evil will once again rise and conquer the love of God."

In Jefferson Township, concern quickly grew that Tommy, perhaps with a pack of satanic cultists, was roaming the region. Search parties were quickly organized in the freezing cold of night. Dogs led the way through the vast wooded areas, while cars cruised the maze of winding back roads. Bettyanne's wounds were so grotesque that the police considered Tommy capable of anything. Hart wondered if he would have to shoot the boy if he lunged at him from behind a tree or some darkened garage.

As he trudged through the snow that Saturday night and in the days to follow, the detective struggled to piece together the boy's life. What could have triggered this sort of carnage? he asked himself. He'd seen a lot of gore in Vietnam, but this bloodletting was different. This was matricide.

Tom Sullivan admitted to the police that his wife was a "nag." He'd even told her on several occasions, "You've got to back off. The boy needs some breathing room." She seemed so concerned with setting his priorities that Tommy couldn't find a way to express his own feelings to her. For years, he simply did as he was told, although increasingly it took more effort, more carping on her part.

Brian noticed how much Tommy was sweating. His older brother seemed nervous, different from usual. Before opening his bedroom door, he saw that Tommy's right hand was covered with blood.

As a child, Tommy had flown model airplanes with his father and played on the Little League teams that Tom, Sr., coached. When he won the varsity spot on the local wrestling team, his parents were always in the stands cheering him on. Despite this, Tommy was still a stranger to them. After saving for what seemed like ages, he purchased a \$1000 stereo system and began to spend his days in his room listening to a growing collection of heavy metal records and becoming more and more absorbed in a game called *Dungeons & Dragons*. Apparently, Tom and Bettyanne didn't notice that he was quietly slipping away from the perfect world that they hoped they were providing for him.

Tommy was a wizard at *Dungeons & Dragons*, a fantasy role-playing game that is criticized by some psychiatrists as fostering an appreciation of murder, rape, mutilations, and other acts of violence. After adopting such roles as thief, fighter, magic user, or druid, players employ violent strategies together with "death rays" and "evil spells" to destroy opponents. Those upset by the game say it desensitizes children to violence's gory realities. Apologists say that the game isn't to blame for an era of history that may be most notable for its callousness toward those realities. Either way, Tommy

Continued on page 68

dead or alive tears a hole in your soul!



"rip it up"

Feel the ecstasy of Dead Or Alive on their definitive greatest hits album, "Rip It Up"! With all new re-mixes of their dance floor classics like "Brand New Lover," "You Spin Me Round (Like A Record)," "Something In My House," "I'll Save You All My Kisses," "In Too Deep," "Lover Come Back To Me," "My Heart Goes Bang" and "Hooked On Love" All unbanded to provide a continuous flow of non-stop great music!

"Rip It Up" On Epic Cassettes, Compact Discs and Records.

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AND SINNERS ALIKE.

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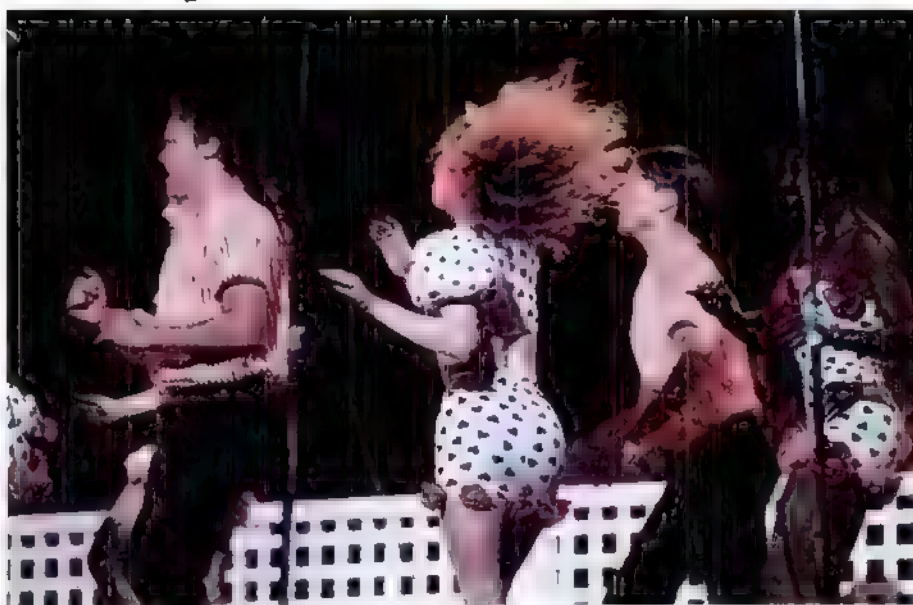


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Eureka

WHAT THE HELL IS A DIRTY DANCING

Thanks to SPIN,
Tama Janowitz
got her first ever
backstage pass.
And she didn't
even use it!



Regrets about
and memoirs
of a wasted
evening by
Tama Janowitz

They sent me out from the magazine to go see the Dirty Dancing concert tour. I had read a bunch of reviews, but I still didn't have the slightest idea of what the event consisted of. In fact, I thought it was a bit odd that the reviews seemed completely unable to describe the event. They made it seem like a non-event, because none of them said what happened or even whether they liked it or not.

I went down to Radio City Music Hall. The place was majestic, gold and glittering, Art Deco like some science fiction palace from an old Buck Rogers movie, the palace of an emperor full of nostalgia. The audience was screaming and yet there was a singular lack of tension in the room as if nothing was about to happen. Two men came out onto the stage in front of the curtain and the audience seemed to recognize them and cheered and then one man said: "Hi, the person standing to my right is Jennifer Grey and I'm Patrick Swayze." I could tell this was a joke because the audience laughed and then the other man explained that he was really an important VJ from Video Hits One, the video station, and the first man was from Z100 Radio's Morning Zoo. Then he gave a speech which ended with him saying Thanks for coming here and helping us out. And I thought, how are we helping you out? I wondered why they needed help but the only reason I could

think of was that we had helped them out by buying tickets, which gave them money.

Maybe I should have seen the Dirty Dancing movie first. I knew Jennifer Grey was the star of the movie and I remembered a story about her which was that she used to live down the block from me and my former boyfriend. This ex-boyfriend knew her. One day we were standing around talking to Jennifer on the street. At this time she was just a regular person who wanted to make it as an actress. After she left I asked him where he had met her and he said he had known her for a while, she used to run up to him and wrap her legs around his waist as a form of greeting. Only one day he was wearing a belt with a big clunky metal buckle made of brass and protruding spikes and she saw him and ran up to him and jumped up and wrapped her legs around his waist but she didn't know about the belt

TOUR?

buckle. And because of this she had trouble walking for three weeks afterwards. But as I say this was before the movie and the great popularity which led to the *Dirty Dancing* concert tour



After the men left the stage there was an infinitely long medley from the live band. It sounded like Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass only not so good. In the front were three horn players. Two stood perfectly still and the third wiggled out of time to the music. I could tell it was making him angry that the other two weren't dancing around and I thought that maybe afterwards the horn player, who was trying to dance and generate a little excitement, would get into a fight with the other two and say to them You know, we agreed to dance and show a little enthusiasm and then maybe they would get into a fist fight.

After a long time the music stopped and there was riotous applause. A shroud hanging over the stage was pulled away revealing several giant sized cans of Mountain Dew with see-through sides, inside of which appeared a couple in each who appeared to be copulating. A man appeared on stage and spoke through a megaphone, something about a Catskills resort and announced that a woman was going to sing.

She was a black woman with a terrific voice and at first it sounded pretty good, and then in the second song five men dressed in black walked back and forth across the stage jerking their arms, and then I realized maybe she had a great voice but some life was missing. It was like hearing a singing statue at Disneyland, a technological breakthrough so brilliant that it took a while to realize it wasn't alive. And then she pointed to a man in the audience and invited him onto the stage and said she was going to sing to him. He wore thick glasses and had a little moustache. He didn't seem at all nervous. She asked him his name, which was Scott, and then she sang a love song to him. He began to wiggle up against her and then she asked if his wife was in the audience, which she was, and Scott was grinning. He looked as though he was going to quit his accounting job and start a new career on a stage with an audience who applauded wildly at everything and anything.



Then some taped music came on. It was James Brown and the band pretended that they were

playing, and a group of dancers began to simulate sex while the audience cheered and my neighbor began to dance in her seat and bobble her head as if she was an aged Beatles fan and the Beatles were playing for her and her alone right this moment at Shea, and I felt like giving her a punch and telling her to quit bobbling, but then I thought she was having a good time and that was okay so why was it getting on my nerves? The dancers were now furiously humping away and I realized that what I was watching was a homogenized PG mainstream live sex show. I was at a strip joint with male and female dancers and live sex acts, and all the choreography and dancing and movement and gracefulness had been left out, and what was left was aerobic exercise, with an emphasis on jiggling breasts and crotch. And sex without the sex.

There was a lot more. There was a lip-sync song by two dancers who apparently needed to rub up against lampposts while they didn't sing, and there was a group called the Contours who were imitation O'Jays on speed. One of them made a speech about the Fifties. It was a history lecture. During the Fifties, he said, there were panty raids, people did it in the back seat of cars, everyone dressed like James Dean. That was the Fifties, he said. The audience cheered and in conclusion he said please don't take drugs and that now there would follow more songs from the *Dirty Dancing* soundtrack



I was waiting for the intermission but I kept thinking how am I going to be able to force myself to come back afterwards? I was worrying about this during the next song where a dancer who was a man appeared to be kissing the breasts of the woman dancer and kept a knee the whole time between her thighs. But after a while he gave up and they ran offstage so that there could be audience participation. The Original Dirty Dancers, or so they claimed, came out onto the stage and invited the audience to join them in learning a new dance but when the people came running up from their seats and jumped on the stage, as far as I could tell there was no dancing going on, although there was some gyrating of hips and a lot of noise from the overhead speakers. Maybe I simply didn't know what dancing was. After a while the audience was sent back to their seats, it was time for the Grand Finale. All the dancers came out with fixed smiles and lots of Energy and Motion and the audience cheered at the hopping and jumping and the twisting and the loud noise. I wondered what was wrong with me that I thought it was the energy and grinning of beings who only vaguely resembled human beings because maybe it was all one giant television set. Something was missing—creativity? originality? a plot? a story? talent? Maybe what was missing was simply life as I knew it.

It was time for the intermission, which was a


good thing because I thought I couldn't possibly be so bored as I had been during the performance. I started to walk around through the lobby. All the people were white and looked like they were at a shopping mall on Saturday somewhere in a regular part of America, wearing pastel shirts in peach and purple and aqua, jumpsuits, and Hawaiian print, and some of them were in their teens and some in their twenties and some in their thirties, and others were couples, and young girls in twos and threes, fifteen years of age and very nubile in the half decay of Radio City Music Hall. I went downstairs to the lobby where the smokers were packed, the air was thick with smoke and suddenly I realized maybe I was in hell because I thought this had to be hell, or at least a science fiction movie like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* or *The Stepford Wives*, where something was a little bit wrong.

I knew I should probably go around and ask people questions, such as were they enjoying the performance. I could overhear them talking to one another about their new cars and what colleges they had been accepted to, and taking a trip to Yugoslavia, and the beach, but I couldn't bring myself to interview them. I tried to tell myself that if they were having fun it was a good thing and it was not my job to act superior but I didn't feel superior, I felt as if I were being strangled. I went into the women's room where four black attendants sat on the couch in the powder room. There was a bunch of balloons in the middle of the table. A woman from the audience went over to the balloons and tried to take them and one of the attendants stood up and started to scream "Put those balloons down!"

How does one avoid becoming cynical in the modern age, which I had always felt I had succeeded in avoiding, at least to the extent of being able to appreciate the harmless enjoyment of others? But this, this was something different. It was like a living death. Culture was beside the point. If culture is missing, so what, and if art is missing, or talent, or real joy, or any energy, what difference does it make if people are able to have a good time? I am no one to act superior only whatever was going on here was something awful, something mindless. Something terrifying was coming, only no one could see.



I started walking for the door. I knew I should have gone back after intermission, but I couldn't. It was almost too late to leave. When I got to the door one of the attendants—they were all black, the only blacks in the place besides the restroom attendants and the singers—stopped me and said if I left the lobby I wouldn't be readmitted. I wanted to thank her but I just left. Even though the air on the street was ninety degrees and stale, and the streets were grim and covered with melted ice cream and vomit, and the light was harsh and yellow and it looked like a good night to get mugged or stabbed, I didn't mind at all.



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GRAY RAMBO

I wouldn't normally go to a film called *Rambo* no matter what, but the money looked good, and I hadn't been to see a violent film in six months, which is how I space them. Even when I was working on a play with Al Pacino, I wouldn't go to see *The Godfather*, because my quota of months wasn't up. So there!

I thought I'd prepare carefully for this one. I put on my *Sports Illustrated* T-shirt, under a beige cotton shirt, unironed; a brown cotton Eisenhower-style jacket (made in Hong Kong); and camouflage (dirty) tennis shoes. Then I fed my Rambo cats—Pretty, Pruney, Puddy, and Pansy—put some mace in my pocket, and sauntered knowingly, but casually, out to see *Rambo III*. I passed some drunks on a stoop who screamed, "Blood!" Past a car whose alarm went off. Past someone drilling a hole in a wall—I was gonna be ready for this movie. Even though I'm vegetarian (90 percent) I had a hot dog at Gray's Papaya, and papaya juice, which I had a hunch would go with at least some of the locale of *Rambo III*. The hot dog seemed to slightly adumbrate my critical facilities, and I thought that would help. Then I thought of John Travolta as I passed One Fifth Avenue, where John had once squeezed by me at the bar, whereupon I whispered to him: "Fabulous..." He said: "I'm outta here!"—and danced out the revolving door. I thought of how Sylvester Stallone had worked on Travolta's body, turning him into a weight lifter and encouraging him to become a "real" muscleman, of course, Travolta became completely upright and could no longer act, or dance! Yes, Stallone may have destroyed a great dancer ("She'll never dance again!"). I wondered how many talents he might destroy in *Rambo III*. I remember at Studio 54 when I was double-O-ing (staring) at a rugged-looking man and then glanced at who he was with. It was Stallone—who gave me an arrogant put-down pseudo-insulted look that you can get in any low-class bilge-water bar! Like I was ogling him! What a fool! It's your bodyguard I want, silly! And I don't mean your underwear deodorant!

Of course, if I could see Rocky's porno film *The Italian Stallion* (aka *Party at Kitty and Stud's*), I might be persuaded to roll over a little—in my opinions.

The first thing I saw when I entered the theater was some woman popping and cracking her chew-

ing gum, one of the bêtes noires of my life. Then a couple of tennis-shoe clad juveniles threw \$5.00 worth of popcorn over each other—this all before the movie began. Twelve people were in the theater (4 p.m. in the afternoon, Friday, downtown).

As the film opens, Rambo is at loose ends—no girlfriends, nothing—wandering around Bangkok playing stick-ball with local delinquents and doing charity-work at a Buddhist temple. An American colonel, having seen *First Blood* and *Rambo*, decides Rambo can save the colonel's boyfriend, another colonel, who is doing S&M with a Russian interrogator in a huge fortress (big towers, etc.) in Afghanistan. The Russian is getting carried away and may kill the American, out of a love-hate complex and too many Quaaludes. But Rambo isn't really interested. He got rid of all his S&M complexes in his last two movies. He is sated with women, sex, money—there is nothing new under the sun to John Rambo, unless it's somebody's son. Yes, a beautiful nine-year-old catches his fancy on the tour of a hospital in Afghanistan, where the Americans have spirited him in the hopes he'll get in the mood to burn, slash, and pillage a few Russians. One look at this kid and Rambo is ready to ram! Bo!

And the kid has lost his parents, uncles, aunts, cousins. He has no one to turn to—and no one to bring child molestation charges against in case a big rich American or Russian brute gets an itch. The path is clear: Rambo will get his Rockys off, the kid will get a new motorbike or helicopter, and the Americans will have done their usual bit in a Third World country—one of the happier, more exotic ways to distribute the wealth. It's almost like Communism, only sexier and *plus intime*. None of these cold-cash giveaways. Rambo pulls out his knife—it gleams—all greased up—the boy eyes it—Rambo says "You want everything..." (Cut!) Rambo celebrates his conquest by playing Horse Soccer—the soccer ball is a little baby lamb (Sportif! these Afghans!) He and his horse kick that lamb all over the soccer field to show the boy how lucky he is Rambo didn't get in an S&M mood and do that to him! The boy gives him the big O—they look at each other like a couple of cows drunk on clover.

Rambo is gung ho—feels like rescuing American Colonel being tortured by Russian Sadist Af-

ghan Motel-Owner and Village-Boss says: "Why must you do this?" Rambo looks at Boy, whose name is Oscar ("Oscar the Wilde-one," as he's now known in Afghanistan), and says: "Because he'd do it for me." From now on Oscar won't leave Rambo alone. He insists on following him into the mine fields surrounding the fortress with his gun sticking up in front of him. Rambo keeps saying, "Down, Boy!" but the kid can't help it. While he crouches by a pillar for comfort, Rambo goes into the fortress to rescue everybody! The little boy plays with the big pillar and sings an old Afghan folk song—"Moon River." He does look a little like Audrey Hepburn in drag. Boy gets tired of the pillar and goes into the fortress, where Rambo is killing a few people and throwing bombs all over the place. The Boy thinks: "Oh goody, fireworks! I may marry this guy!" Rambo grabs the kid, throws him over his shoulder, and goes running through all kinds of tunnels and holes. He sticks the boy in a hole where there's a sewer—very symbolic. They swim through the urine and dung-balls of the sewer and come out in—Montego Bay, Jamaica. Yes, that's it, they "come out" in Montego Bay, Jamaica, and there's Noel Coward on the beach. "Hey, Rocky—yoo hoo," he says. "Bring that rapscallion to me, I'll teach him a thing or two—a few ditties to sing to you on cold winter nights, after you've taken over Moscow." "Buzz-off, yee olde faerie!" says Rambo. "He's mine and I don't want him turned into a fag!" "Oh, buzz you, yee olde farte," says Noel, "I just wanted to make him—sophisticated!" "I bet!" says Rambo, and does a Pow! Pow! on silly olde Noel—the Coward!

"This place is too faggy," says Rambo. "I better take you home where you have no one—it's better than catching AIDS in some tourist resort." So they use Rocky Rambo's Gold Express Card to take (buy) a plane back to Afghanistan. Rambo rents a condominium for the boy in the fortress, which is now called Trump Towers, and says: "Wait right here—I'll be back as soon as my next flick is over—it's called *Breakfast at Stiff-Annie's*. It's about a rapist who has lunch in a delicatessen." The Boy says: "Get you, girl!" and calls room service to have two bellboys brought up. . . . "It's too late—he's become Americanized!" Rambo thinks, kicking dirt in the umpire's face, and heads out for his next "Take!" . . .

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HONDA

Come ride with us.

Stop in the name of love: (L-R) Alan Wilder, David
Gahan, Andrew Fletcher, Martin Gore





Depeche Mode is an art band that became the favorite of teenyboppers and other moody people everywhere. Where did they go right?

After seeing Depeche Mode at the Rose Bowl, hairdressers at Sal's Hair Magic on Hollywood Boulevard decided that they were four wimps who don't even know how to throw a football.

Busboys at the International House of Pancakes on Route 28 thought Depeche Mode was French for "hurry-up fashion" or "fast forward."

Check-out clerks at the A&P in Plainview spent their coffee breaks feeling moody and listening to live bootleg tapes of Depeche Mode.

Doctors at the Mayo Clinic found that Depeche Mode attracted hordes of young girls. Actually, only the front rows were young girls, but even so, young girls are great. They were the first to be hip to Elvis, the Beatles, the Stones, and all the other legends.

Inmates on tier three at the Upstate Correctional Facility fail to comprehend why Depeche Mode, although they aren't a chart act and don't end up in the Top Ten, nevertheless play the same halls as Fleetwood Mac, who sell five million albums.

Down at the crematorium outside Boca Raton, Florida, they say Depeche Mode is not a real band because they don't have a drummer, don't have a guitar player, they use electronics and tapes.

Bicycle messengers from Atomic Couriers put Depeche Mode down for being a pop band.

DEPECHE MODE: One of our aims is to bring credibility back into pop. In England, there is no difference between rock and pop, but in America there is. In America, pop is like a dirty word. So many people are anti-Top 40, while in Britain you get in the Top 30, it's not a bad thing. You can be in the Top Five and still be good, still keep your fans. The problem with pop bands is often they're not appreciated until maybe ten years later. Gary Glitter, T. Rex, and glam bands who were very throwaway in the early Seventies are real hip now, whereas rock bands like U2 tend to be accepted at the time.

Interview by Scott Cohen

Photography by Anton Corbijn

MUSIC FOR MODERNS



IN A HOTEL OVERLOOKING A PARK

DAVID GAHAN (lead singer): I don't really have heroes. I've got bands I admire, a lot of bands from the Sixties, like the Doors and the Rolling Stones, but only particular areas of the Stones. *Beggar's Banquet*, for instance, is one of my all time favorite albums. I definitely would rather have been in the Stones than in the Beatles. My favorite photographs are old pictures of the Stones from the Sixties. I got a framed photograph at home of Keith Richards, where he looks like he's been to hell and back and back again. I like the film *Gimme Shelter*, where Brian Jones looks totally fucked up and beyond help, for the same reason. They don't make films

like that today. When you see rock videos now, it's all glam. This is the concert and this is it. All these bands have all this power and all this money to spend on things, but you can only buy so many cars and yachts. What happened to the heart and soul? It's more like models on the catwalk.

If there were two of you, which other band would you choose to be in?

New Order, the Smiths, maybe the Cure. Possibly none of us would ever mention it in interviews, but I think there are similar areas in all three bands to Depeche Mode, especially in New Order. I often read interviews with New Order where Hooky talks about being one of the last surviving punk bands. That's something I like

Left: David Gahan feeling moody after a hard day of sampling. Below and right: Alan Wilder (left) and Andrew Fletcher think up retorts for Sal's Hair Magic.

The same with the Cure. Although they're a major act, now that they're on a major label, they still have a punky image in the way that they don't toe the line.

How do you not toe the line?

Our stage performance is very different. We use all synthesizers and tapes and stuff, and some people can't handle that. They want to see a drummer and they want to see a guitarist running up and down a stage, so it gets up people's noses. I don't quite understand that, because in the end, the song's the most important thing. If you haven't got a song, it doesn't matter anyway, and songs are the strength in Depeche Mode.

OVER A CUP OF COFFEE

DAVID I like to feel tense and unrelaxed. I don't like to sleep before a gig or eat before a gig. I want to feel on edge and I want the audience to feel that way as well.

What about after a gig?

When it comes to a close situation in a small room, I often feel very claustrophobic. I don't like that kind of intensity. Sometimes you get to the boiling point where you actually think you can kill someone, just to release some energy or to find out what it feels like. I don't know if I could actually do it if it came to it, but I'm not scared of being killed myself.

How close have you come to death?

A few years ago, I was driving to the studio in my first car, a black '83 Ford Escort. I was going about 80 mph and somebody pulled out in front of me. I slammed on the brakes and when you slam on the brakes at that speed, I found out, you just don't stop, the wheel takes over and suddenly the whole car was spinning around and I couldn't see anything. The next thing I remember, there was a lot of glass shattering and I smashed through the windscreen. I also remember I had the Doors playing, really loud.

What song was it?

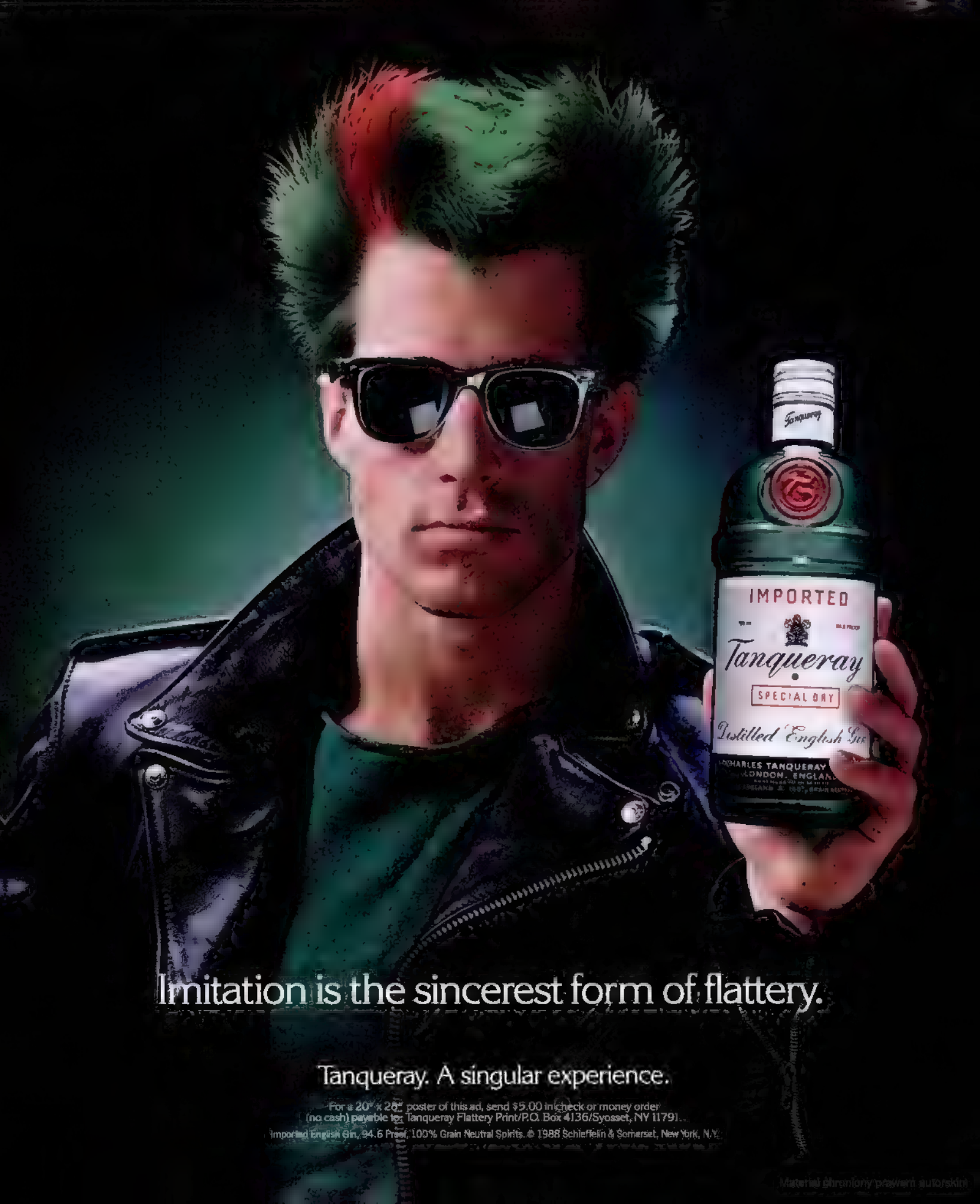
I think it was "L.A. Woman." When the car finally stopped, the tape was still going and the car was completely totalled. I remember the music was really loud still. I tried to get out of the car, but I couldn't get out because the doors were caved in.

Continued on page 89



I hate it when I have to take over the front man role. We're sort of back room boys.





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ESCALATOR TO HEAVEN

A year ago, Kingdom Come was just a demo tape that sounded uncannily like Led Zeppelin. Now, as their album goes platinum, even Robert Plant has to nod in tribute.

Article by Dan Hedges

Photography by Chris Carroll

Paris, early evening. Across from an Algerian peep show, in the fading Montmartre light, there's a fright-wigged hooker with a face like Telly Savalas and a pair of legs that just won't quit.

On board Kingdom Come's tour bus, however, the band doesn't notice. With fifty-odd European gigs down and three to go, even Paris doesn't hold a whole lot of charm. After two months of funny money, lumpy beds, and no room service after ten, we're talking zombie hour, weariness so thick you could cut it with a platinum album.

"It's Moët," guitarist Danny Stag insists, driving everybody crazy with another lecture on French pronunciation. "The 't' is hard, not soft. Understand?"

Bassist Johnny B. Frank just stares out the window at the traffic, not listening anymore. "I ate a sandwich at a soundcheck a week ago," he says, then grimaces. "It's still hanging around."

Welcome to the big time, before Monsters of Rock, before it's really dawned on the five members of Kingdom Come how popular they are back home in the States. Everything has happened al-

most too fast. It was only back in January, at a radio programmers' convention, that PolyGram Records handed out a sampler cassette of future releases, among them "Get It On" by Kingdom Come, an unknown band that had never played a gig. The song was four minutes of glorious, riff-laden crunge so blatantly close to vintage Led Zep that it was almost criminal.

It was also extremely smart. After all, "Stairway to Heaven" remains the most popular tune on rock radio. A decade after its demise, Zeppelin still sells. But today's A&R folk tend to focus on the visually marketable, and as singer Lenny Wolf notes, "There hasn't been much rock lately with heart. The tense, emotional stuff isn't around anymore. It's become a fashion show. Five guys dressed like women."

So it wasn't surprising that several bombast-starved radio stations (like Detroit's WLLZ) singled out the still commercially unreleased tune for airplay. Some deejays took a "mystery band" tack, just playing it cold and supplying no details, and the phones were soon jammed by calls from kids



Kingdom Come: (clockwise from above) James Kottak, Danny Stag, Johnny B. Frank, Rick Steier, Lenny Wolf

Returning to L.A. in early '87, he cranked out songs for months, looking for a direction. "Half of them had a more bluesy, rock feel," he recalls. "The other half—well, people would have said I'd ripped off the Beatles and Comsat Angels." When PolyGram signed him on the basis of the heavier stuff, he set about assembling Kingdom Come. Slightly arrogant, though friendly in a strident way, Wolf is a rooster in a spotlight barnyard. As he admits, "I'm not easygoing. I'm German. A perfectionist. I know what I want, how to do it, and don't have time for a million questions. It's 'get it done or . . . next'."

The band members are still feeling each other out, jump-starting the solidarity that would have developed more naturally had Kingdom Come dragged itself around the L.A. bar circuit for five years before landing a deal. Then too, Wolf admits he's "not exactly Mr. David Lee Roth." He had two weeks of touring experience prior to forming Kingdom Come, and concedes that their early gigs were erratic. "Even in my home town," he says, "I thought I'd get 'em by the balls, and I got zero. But then, halfway through, it was . . . yeah!"

But when it comes to the Zeppelin comparisons, he gets a tad defensive. "Just because a few phrases are similar . . . Listen to 'Hideaway' or 'Shout It Out.' Nothing to do with Zeppelin. Danny [Stag, guitarist] grew up with Hendrix. Doesn't own a Led Zeppelin record. We mixed the album at Electric Lady, and it made his year. It was 'Where did Jimi pee?' He gets the psychedelic blues feel, but he also knows how to burn."

True. From the moment Kingdom Come hits the stage at the Élysée Montmartre, it's clear that Stag's fluid approach owes more to the acid swirl of "Bold as Love" than the lemon-juiced crunge of "Whole Lotta Love." And the band is tight. But that uncannily familiar vocal wail of Wolf's? It's no surprise that Robert Plant dedicated two songs to them during a recent London gig—if facetiously. "I don't think he's thrilled about us," Wolf says, "though he should be flattered."

Mind you, the Zeppelin parallels stop there. Kingdom Come's off-duty profile is pretty low-key. They have their fun, but debauchery as a full-time cottage industry doesn't seem to hold much appeal. "That's because we've all gone off the deep end before," Danny Stag says. "To me, what's important is that I get it together to play my ass off every night. Living in L.A., we've seen too many

people who were on top and are working in a liquor store now."

As this goes to press, Kingdom Come is top twenty. Platinum. Until the royalties roll in, however, it's a safe bet that Stag won't be moving out of his brother's garage. And Lenny Wolf will undoubtedly have to continue defending his band against charges of selling out before they've even seen their first dime.

"Everyone wants to drag you down when you're successful," Wolf says. "When Aerosmith came out, people called them a rip-off of the Stones. But kids loved it, and now Aerosmith are one of the best around. People think we're five guys from Glitterland who bought guitars and got lucky. But five years from now?" He shrugs. "People will be accusing other bands of sounding like Kingdom Come."

convinced it was the second coming of you-know-who.

Retailers began submitting huge advance orders for the LP (700,000 copies in all), prompting PolyGram to release *Kingdom Come* a month early. "It took off so fast that we didn't believe what was going on," Wolf says. "It was, like, 'What do we do now?' The first two months were really stressful."

Born in Hamburg, Germany, Lenny Wolf dipped into film acting and juvenile delinquency during his teens before settling down with music. After moving to L.A. in the early Eighties, with no money and six words of English, he sang with a band called Stone Fury, who signed with MCA, then went nowhere. Describing their two impeccably-produced albums as "a perfect fuck, but no orgasm," he headed back to Germany to lick his wounds.

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COMICS



Walking into a comic book store is twice, ten times, a thousand times more exciting than going into a record store. You go into a record store these days and if you can find any actual records buried away behind the videocassettes, they're all safely stacked into hermetically pure sections that guarantee you no surprises whatsoever, no risks available, no new possibilities, no hope. The speed metal rack is as strictly ghettoized as the Broadway show tune section; the post-punk industrial noisemakers are as separate-but-equally-safe as the glam metal fops and the indie-label gloom creeps and the teen-a-pop twinkies and the New Age synth-harpists. The only real excitement in a record store these days comes from the marketing magic that makes every sub-subcultural stage so certain they're expressing individuality.

Meanwhile, across the street, in that comic store you've never actually been inside because you're afraid all your speed-synth industrial gloom-twinkie friends will think you've lost all your highly cultivated sense of cultivation, all hell has broken loose, all bets are off, all things are possible, no holds are barred. Genreification can't even get a grip, even in a world ruled by mini-edition-in-a-plastic-bag anal-retentive collector-fanatics, because genres keep folding in on themselves. Superheroes have begun to ruminate on their sexual foibles. Funny animals have shed their babyfat and commenced to whacking off the heads of other fuzzy cutie-pies. Every comic book character who ever existed has been revived, superhero or undermensch, animal, vegetable, or Kryptonite; and for every revival, a hundred new mutations have sprung forth. Detectives search outer space for clues; teenagers search shopping malls for sex; knights in shining armor meet grunting samurai in 7-11 parking lots. The huge comic book conglomerates are producing stuff as bizarre as the underground independents, while the underground independents are producing stuff as slick as the huge conglomerates. There are comics with no words, and comics with more words than some novels. Comics from America are ripping off comics from Japan that were inspired by comics from France based on American comics—and that's a fairly simple genealogy.

Where it all began, of course, was with underground comics from the late Sixties. Where it all began before that, was in the Silver Age of Superheroes of the mid-Sixties, the Marvel Era that took up where the Golden Age of the late

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Alfred Jerry's play *Ubu Roi*, which uses comic illustrations to describe absurdist adventures, debuts.

Walter Elias Disney born.

First full appearance of Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland*. Fine art meets fantasy storytelling.

George Herriman's *Krazy Kat* appears as a regular newspaper feature.

Tarzan comic strip first appears. The roots of the adventure comic.

Betty Boop makes first cartoon appearance, in the Fleischer Bros.' *Dirty Dishes*.

First appearance of Chester Gould's *Dick Tracy*.

First comic book ever, *Funnies on Parade*, issued. Compiled by salesman Max C. Gaines, it is a 32-page reprint of popular Sunday newspaper strips.

Jerry Siegel and Jerome Shustek, two teenagers from Cleveland, publish a science-fiction fanzine featuring an illustrated story about Superman.

Alex Raymond's first *Flash Gordon* strip heralds a major influence on generations of comic artists.

Funnies on Parade (Series 1) is the first comic book sold to public (10 cents).

USAGI YOJIMBO



If punk rock didn't change the world, at least it revitalized the comics scene. The two underground forces merged on album covers and fanzines like *New York Rocket*, where Kazimierz G. Propolis, better known as *Kaz*, displayed his Buzzbomb strip (opposite page). Above: America turns Japanese. Right: Striptease by Charles Burns, one of the artists first featured in *RAW* magazine. Burns: "I wouldn't call myself a sickie, but plenty of people would."

Thirties and early Forties left off. (It's in the nature of comic book fanboy obsessiveness that all of these Eras and Ages and such have been religiously chronicled; it's equally in their nature that no two fanboys can ever agree about anything about any of these Eras and Ages; everything is up for debate, eternally and in microscopic detail.) Where it began before that, of course, was with the blood-thickening gore of EC comics, with Carl Barks's greed-powered Scrooge McDuck, with Hal Foster's Prince Valiant and Milton Caniff's *Terry and the Pirates* and Walt Kelly's *Pogo* and E.C. Segar's *Popeye* and George Herriman's *Krazy Kat* and Winsor McKay's *Little Nemo*. (Where it began this most recent time, let's be humble enough to admit), was probably either Japan or France or both. Europe and Asia have always embraced comics as reading matter suitable for adults, and the results have long been far more sophisticated visually and thematically than the superhero books from the U.S. More, the Europeans have always revered the American comic pioneers and kept their work alive and available. Acknowledging an audience other than simply teenaged boys caused overseas publishers to recognize the need for topics and topicality, for nudity and fashion and visual flash. It was only when American comic artists were exposed to such foreign concepts that the ice began to crack over here.)

There's certainly no end in sight. The fairly recent outgrowth of black-and-white comic books has begun to settle back in the marketplace, and some of the lengthy graphic novels



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are having trouble finding an audience, but there's no reason to believe that anybody's going to give up the freedom that the new comics have granted themselves. There's no reason to believe they could—now that the fences have been kicked over, nobody can seem to remember why they were there in the first place.

Poring over the pages of comic after comic, you're left with the impression of hundreds, maybe even thousands, of heroically addled artists spread thick in areas like New York and LA and, for some reason, Seattle, spread thin over all the rest of the country, and all of them scribbling their mighty little hearts out . . . for

what? So they can compete for space in a comic book specialty shop with the latest issue of some superhero in spandex pajamas, desperately trying to gain the attention of some acned-to-the-max adolescent who has sworn to devote all of what's left of his life to unraveling the X-Men family tree? (Cut to close-up of R. Crumb's *HUP* #1, featuring debonair pitchman Stan Shnooter, arm wrapped around the waist of a cantaloupe-breasted young lovely. Stan: "HEY FANBOY, GROW UP!! Yeah, I'm talkin' a you! Listen, are you gonna waste yer whole life lookin' at that super hero crap? C'mon! Grab yourself a real adult comic!" Ms. Cantaloupes:

New Fun Comics.
1st National Periodicals (later DC) comic appears.

Detective Comics #1 appears, later home for the Batman. (Valued at \$17,500 today)

Action Comics #1, first appearance by Superman. The world was never to be the same. (A near-mint condition copy of this baby will get you at least 25 G's on the fanboy market.)

Stan Lee joins staff at Timely Comics. Detective #27, Batman first appears.

Superman #1 appears. (Got one of these lying around? Add 18-thou to your bank account.)

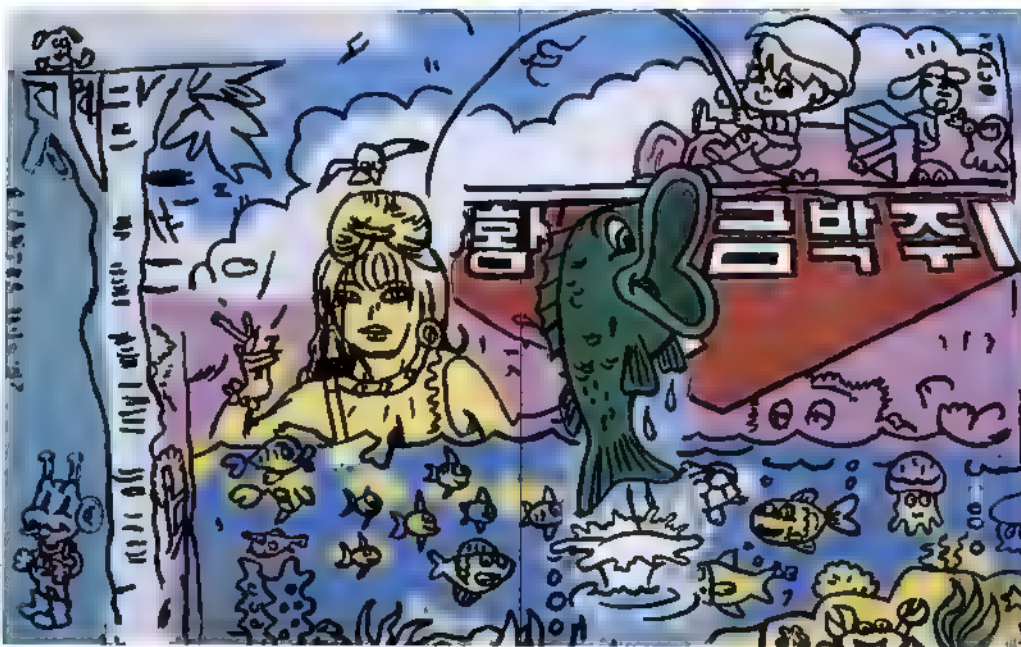
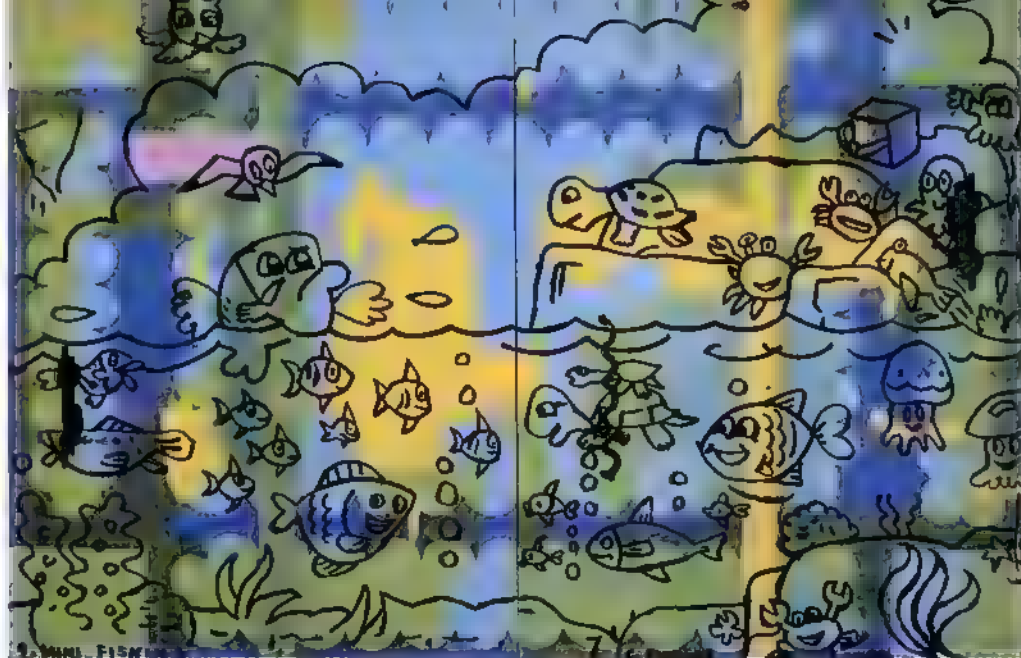
Marvel Comics #1 published.

First appearance by Will Eisner's *Spirit*, in a 16-page Sunday newspaper supplement.

Jack Kirby and Joe Simon's *Captain America* appears from Timely (later to become Marvel) Comics.

1st Superman radio show broadcast. The beginning of comic books crossing over to other media.

Series of Superman cartoons produced by the Fleischer Bros. studio. Probably the finest comic-book-based cartoons ever.



"Don't be afraid!"

No, the truth is that Today's Contemporary Cartoonist has more, ever so much more, on his/her mind than the corruption of the innocent. You've got the mighty *Calvin & Hobbes*, Gary Larsen's *Far Side*, and former underground cartoonist Bill Griffith's *Zippy the Pinhead* holding the higher ground of the daily newspaper syndicated strips. You've got Lynda Barry (probably the most gifted short story writer of her time, by the way) and Matt Groening and Norman Macdonald and Charles Burns and John Douglas producing exemplary stuff for alternative weekly newspapers all across the country. You've got Alan Moore and Frank Miller and Howard Chaykin messing with the parameters of the cape-and-

pajama superheroes, turning them into myths and neurotics at the same time.

Hardly any of the current comics are willing to settle for taking a small swipe at anything simple, and in a decade when popular culture seems to nibble instead of gnaw, nothing could be more refreshing. There's a big jolt of fun that comes from watching Cherry Poptart, drawn precisely in the style of Archie's beloved Betty and Veronica, as she humps her mother's date and her mother, but it's the easily defined thrill that comes from watching too-familiar totems mildly defiled. There's a more profound thrill that comes from one of Jaime Hernandez's *Love and Rockets* stories—drawn in a way that resembles the blandness of Archie comics but

Left: Gary Panter parlayed a fine arts education into a comics career, then parlayed that into a gig as design director for Pee-wee Herman. Panter: "My plan was to follow painting tradition while breaking out of it. I felt my work could be anywhere: in the fields, a comic book, on television. If it bucked the system enough it was alright." Right: Gekiga comics in Japan generate animated television spinoffs, which generate toys. Which, in turn, generate low-grade American imitations. Below: Watercolor page from *Blood*, covers from *Love and Rockets*, Peter Bagge's *Neat Stuff*, and the first installment in the proposed complete works of Robert Crumb.

set in a distinctly Southwestern terrain—as it weaves past joke setups toward the romantic existence people wish they had, once school is over and life goes on. There's a more truly shocking thrill that follows a reading of Mari Rivera's *The Cabbie*, which swipes (or appropriates, for all you postmoderns out there) the rudimentary style of Chester Gould's *Dick Tracy*, matching but not necessarily topping the fearless fiatofal's pathological need to get to the bottom of a crime by as direct a route as possible.

Homages and appropriations and influences and direct steals are interesting enough, certainly, and yet not nearly enough all the same. What makes the current world of comics so powerful is its willingness to operate from so many distinct points of view, to endorse so many separate, disparate belief systems. The visual vocabulary of comic artists is far larger today than it ever has been before, ranging—sometimes on the same page—from wispy watercolor washes to hard-edged abstractions, and completely reconsidering how panels are arrayed. The old comic books were trapped inside the stilted camera of a movie from the early talkies era; they moved like they were talking to a microphone hidden in a vase on the table, they dissolved and cut and zoomed so stiffly you'd have sworn—at least until the undergrounds arrived—that LSD had never been invented.

What's most heroic about comics now is not that guys like Miller and Moore and Chaykin are trying to lead audiences of arrested adolescents into something resembling boyish adulthood, but that there's so much room inside a comic book today, so many possibilities that exist and are being seized. Everything is fair game, and nothing is sacred.

Some of the very best of the new era of comics—let's give it a suitably trite name: the Brass Age, maybe, perhaps—are purely autobiographical. They follow the lead of Crumb, who has never stopped crabbily chronicling his life and crimes, but they studiously avoid developing a blueprint a formula—which is exactly the technique the old comics industry always used for the appreciation of fresh innovation. Harvey Pekar's aggressively obsessive *American Splendor* is the autobiographical urge at its crankiest; while Dori Seda's *Lonely Nights: Stories to Read When the Couple Next Door Is Fucking Too Loud* are the most whimsically pornographic. Both tread where Crumb traveled first, and yet neither seem to be in his shadow.

As the comics embrace more and more of the

Max Gaines sells his superhero properties and starts his own company, Educational Comics (EC), and publishes *Picture Stories from the Bible*. It fails miserably.

Burne Hogarth leaves the *Tarzan* strip after ten years when the United Features Syndicate refuses to pay him royalties on book sales. He founds the *School of Visual Arts* the following year in New York.

After Max Gaines dies in a boating accident, his son Bill takes over the floundering EC line, and introduces the first crime, western, and love comics.

Pogo first appears in *The New York Star*.

Superboy #1 appears, beginning the polluting torrent of spin-off books (Jimmy Olsen, Lois Lane, etc.).

Bill Gaines changes the "E" in EC from "Educational" to "Entertaining," and introduces what will become known as the "New Trend" titles: *Crypt of Terror*, (later *Tales from the*

Crypt), *Vault of Horror*, *The House of Fear*, *Ward Fantasy*, *Crime Suspense Stories*, and *Two-Fisted Tales*.

Seven-year-old Robert Crumb draws his first comic book, *Dilly in Shocktown*.

Mad, under the creative direction of Harvey Kurtzman, debuts.

In his book, *Seduction of the Innocent*, Frederic Wertham accuses comics of warping young minds. A Senate inquiry follows. The comics industry sets up self-censoring organization—the Comics Code

Marvel's *The X-Men*, with Jack Kirby's art, sets the stage for a revival that achieved even more popularity in the Eighties.

EC Comics

The first EC comic I ever owned was *Mad* #3. On a trip with my parents in 1952 I plucked it from a revolving metal rack in Bowling Green or St. Augustine or Cody, Wyo. I was 10 years old; tall, skinny, wore glasses; was uncoordinated, shy. For the rest of the trip I sat on the back seat of our '50 Hudson and, between bouts of hysterics, read "Dragged Net" and "Lone Stranger" to my parents, who smiled.

The ages 10, 11, 12, I see now, are significant developmentally. The child, while still totally dependent on the parents, is for the first time gaining freedom from them. For the first time the child can separate sufficiently from the family to carve its identity with its own hands.

Fletcher Sparrow and Davey Peters were not the sort of company parents would want at the table when such carving was going on. Fletcher was a thin, pale, only child, who spent hours trying to comb his hair like Tony Curtis. He lived in a tiny apartment with his mother, a dental hygienist, and her occasional boyfriends. He swore and smoked and showed his mother's falsies to his friends. Davey was short, prematurely cynical, and prankishly inclined. He had already established a CV that would have made most child analysts drool: chasing Mrs. Kephart with her homeroom flag; ambushing a patrol car on Sansome St. with Roman candles; dousing toy cars with lighter fluid, torching them atop a steep backyard obstacle course, and taking home movies while they dropped and burned.

And, of course, EC comics were on few adults' lists of recommended reading. At the time EC published 10 titles: *Tales from the Crypt*, *Vault of Horror*, *Haunt of Fear*, *Weird Science*, *Weird Fantasy*, *Crime Suspense*, *Shock Suspense*, *Frontline Combat*, *Two-Fisted Tales*, and *Mad*. EC's stable of writers and artists—Harvey Kurtzman, Bill Elder, Jack Davis, Wally Wood, Joe Orlando, Jack Kamen, Reed Crandall, Al Williamson, Graham "Ghastly" Ingels, John Severin—was unequaled; and its publisher, William M. Gaines, gave their talents full rein.

What truly made EC great was its horror and sex. The man who was chained in the old hag's attic. The husband who incinerated his wife with floodlights and the one who froze his. The wife who put her husband's hacked-up remains in Mason jars and the one who used the shop display windows for hers. The man who was eaten by piranhas in his bubble bath and the one who slid down the pole honed razor-sharp and the one who fed himself to dogs. The woman who was steamed by the smoke ring and the one rotted by the perfume and the one whose face was torn from her cranial bones. The space colonist who had fifty beautiful women in suspended animation and unthawed them one at a time like Sara Lees

Horror and sex. At 10, 11, 12, the child remains weak and vulnerable. It is aware of the possibilities of destruction and its inability to protect itself against them. EC, arguably, assisted adjustment here. Several issues a month, four stories an issue, by ax and acid, fang and talon, club and disintegrator, heart-poundingly plotted, excruciatingly well-drawn, EC allowed us to confront destruction in every imaginable form. We could contemplate it and brood about it and replay it in our dreams. We might shiver. We might shudder. But we overcame destruction. Several issues a month, we woke or walked from it, unbruised and not visibly scarred.

And sex. The child is also about to turn adolescent. It will be consciously pursuing its libidinal drives. EC (whose basic male-female relationship



PAGES FROM
THE RARE
FIRST 3 ISSUES
OF THE COMICS
MAGAZINE FOR
DAMNED
INTELLECTUALS!

EDITED BY ART SPIEGELMAN AND FRANCOISE MOULY

was: Boy meets Girl; Boy kills Girl; Girl—"rotting, pulsating, oozing slime"—returns from the grave for Boy) was less than therapeutically valuable here. Of course, for a child in the early Fifties there was little healthy sex depicted anywhere. Superman and Lois did not kiss. Tubby and Little Lulu did not play doctor. Tarzan and Jane never behaved like they had a clue where they got Boy. Even in adult American popular culture, sexuality was repressed or violent far more often than it was fun. Ricky and Lucy had separate beds. The older guys on the corner talked only about the girls they "got" or "scored" or "banged." At least EC used the sado-masochism to confront what exists within, but has been concealed. Such confrontations can lead to self-education and growth and, in some circles, are prized.

My parents, however, were of a different critical school. I don't think they read Fredric Wertham, M.D., a psychiatrist, whose writings accused com-

Das Kampf,
Vaughn Bodé's first
rock opera.

Herbie "The Fat Fury" Popwecker, goofiest superhero ever (fat as he was tall, armed with an arsenal of deadly lollipops) returns.

James Warren re-issues *Creepy*, a larger black-and-white comic book, outside Comics Code's control, bringing back some of EC's great

Marleen Sketchbook appears in *Harvey Kurtzman's Help!* It is R. Crumb's first professionally published work.

Crumb takes LSD for the first time.

Crumble takes a "weird drug" which puts him in an "electrical fog" for several months.

Howard Chaykin
loses virginity at
summer camp.

First appearance of Crumb's Mr. Natural character, in *Karamazov's*.

Jack Kirby jumps from Marvel to DC, for whom he creates a whole slew of new characters (The New Gods, Mr. Miracle, Kismet, etc.) that the company keeps ownership of.

Roy Thomas and Barry Smith begin *Canon the Barbarian* for Marvel, based on the classic pulp-fiction series by Robert E. Howard. Smith's art sets a new standard in elegant illustration.

Spindley's pool takes drugs and shakes up the Code.

ic books of turning innocent children into major felons. I doubt they were swayed by the Readers Digest articles or PTA speakers who implicated comics in the spread of juvenile delinquency, the Red Menace, and general moral decline. But my parents remembered whose nightmares woke them. They recalled who hid behind his seat, eyes closed, hands over ears, when the Flying Monkeys came for Dorothy. And they forbid me to buy any comics that were scary. As a fledgling EC zealot, that left my wings pretty well clipped.

Still, I did what I could. I bought *Mad*. I bought *Panic*, a *Mad* clone introduced in early 1954, and *Piracy*, which was devoted to sea stories and launched later that year. When *Two-Fisted Tales* dined its blood-and-guts into a dulter pulp heroes format, I added that to my approved list and bought it too. I read the other ECs at newsstands and drug stores, until their owners asked me to leave; and I spent hours in Davey's and Fletcher's bedrooms attempting to close my cultural gap.

By now, we had formally established EC in our lives. One promotion had been the chartering of official EC Fan-Addict Clubs for groups of five or more. Enlisting Max Garden, Howard Frimble (a dull, plump boy who lived around the corner), and Stuart, my younger cousin, we rushed in our 25-cent initiation fees and became card-carrying members.

We were as devoted to our club as any Mason. We met twice a month in Davey's basement. We elected officers. (By virtue of having the most ECs and it being his basement, Davey was President. Fletcher was Vice-President, and I was Secretary-Treasurer.) We traded, exchanged tips on which dealers stocked which titles and when deliveries were made, quizzed each other on all manners of EC esoterica (identify by issue number, story title, and artist: [a] five corpses who kill their murderer; [b] four characters whose eviscerated organs are laid out in the last panel; three children who slay their parents) and debated such compelling issues as who at EC was best suited to draw everyone we knew.

One never-ending quest of the club was its search for back issues. None of us had bought ECs from the start. The resultant gaps in our collections continually grew because of EC's poor distribution system and the financial and social pressures which caused once dependable dealers to suddenly drop its line. Our only recourse was to meet someone who had ECs for trade or find those five-and-tens or grocery stores which sold old, usually coverless comics from cardboard boxes or wrapped, three-for-a-dime, in cellophane. We were constantly setting off, eyes peeled, fingers crossed, on treks into neighborhoods to find such stores.

The Club's greatest trek was to New York. The building was on a narrow, industrial street on the East Side. We rode up in an elevator with—we noted ominously—padded walls. We knocked on the door.

"Who's there?"

We told him.

"It's kids," the voice said.

"Kids?" another voice said.

"Kids actually read our stuff?"

The office was dingy and cluttered. Except for some cubicles with drafting tables, it might have belonged to a shirt manufacturer or shoe company. The dozen men and women looked more like aunts and uncles than gods or fiends. The staff stared at us and we stared at the clutter. On one desk was the sign: DO NOT DISTURB. HAVING SEX.

Then Gaines arrived.

The staff began shouting, "It's him! It's him!" and salaaming.

Gaines invited us into his office. He was big and fat. Not fat-fat. Big-fat. He asked us our names and where we were from. He pretended to remember publishing Davey's letter requesting stories about ghouls. He was pleased to hear Fletcher say we were adoring fans. He was very pleased when Max said we wanted to buy comics.

But while Gaines would sell us some current issues that had not yet reached Philadelphia and one or two overstocked annuals, and while he would ask the staff to autograph flyers for us—I got Gaines, Feldstein, Williamson, Krugstein, Elder, Kurtzman and Craig on mine—he would not sell us back issues.

It was our first taste of being hip.

Like a dilettante character in a between-the-wars novel, I had not been keeping an eye on the world. Thunderclouds were gathering. The Wertham-Digest-PTA chorus was being heard. I, like Fletcher Sparrow and Davey Peters, had always snickered at critics of comic books. But

Congress—the United States Congress—the United States of America's Congress—decided to investigate comic books.

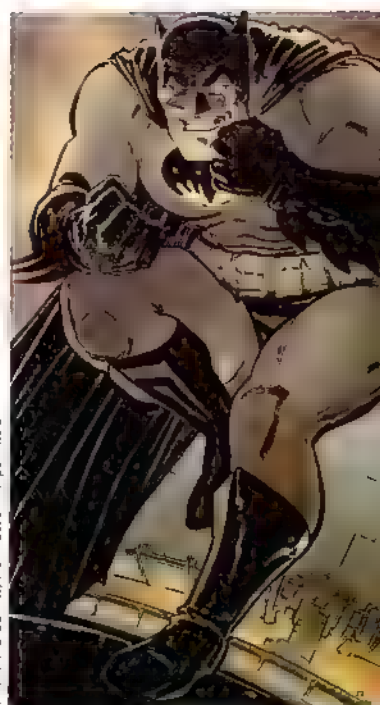
The Congressional hearings did not go well for EC. At one point, Gaines denied that a cover illustration of an axe murderer gripping the severed head of a young woman by the hair constituted bad taste. Now, he explained, if the head was depicted higher, blood dripping from the veins... Shortly after the hearings, EC folded its line.

Postscript for Fredric Wertham, M.D.

Fletcher Sparrow, by the time we reached high school, was obviously gay. In the Fifties in West Philadelphia that was not such a good thing. Even EC did not do pro-gay stories. Fletcher quit school and became a hairdresser. The last contact anyone in our club had with him was when he sold Davey Peters the pick of his ECs in order to buy some Angora sweaters.

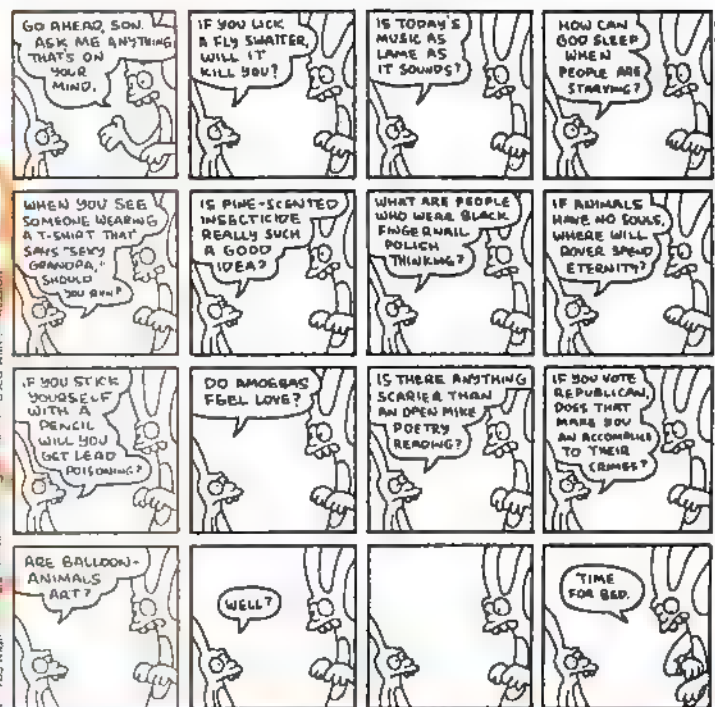
Davey Peters was expelled from Bard College his freshman year. After a few years scuffling in the East, Davey moved to Los Angeles to make pornographic films. In 1976 he shot his girlfriend and killed himself with an overdose of pills. I learned the name of the lawyer who probated his estate but could not bring myself to inquire about Davey's ECs.

—Bob Levin



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Founded on a dare by Francoise Mouly and Art Spiegelman, *RAW* magazine (left) treated comics as fine art. Issue No. 1 was subtitled "The Graphic Magazine of Postponed Suicides," and the magazine has grown from there. Above: Frank Miller turned Batman into a disturbed vigilante losing the battle to keep his dark side under control in *The Dark Knight Returns*. Very existential, very film noir. Below: The world's most consistently funny strip, Matt Groening's *Life in Hell*.



© 1985 Matt Groening. Used with permission.

L'Echo Des Savannes first issue published; the first real French underground and the roots of innovative French comics.

The beginnings of Art Spiegelman's "Maus" story appear as a 3-pager in *Funny Aminals* (sic) #1. He later expands it into a book-length work.

Ralph Bakshi's *Fritz the Cat* movie (based on Cramb character) opens. Cramb bates it, and in his next Fritz strip, has the little feline skewered with an ice pick.

DC releases Berni Wrightson's *Swamp Thing*, heralding a new era in horror comics.

Cromb's Zap #4 found obscene by NYC court (due mostly to his incestuous "Joe Blow" strip). Cromb takes his last LSD trip. First LP by R. Cromb and his Cheap Suit Serenaders released.

DC begins publication of oversized facsimile reprints of the most valued comic books under the general title of "Famous First Editions." The nadir of mainstream comics.

Métal Hurlant magazine debuts in France, introducing European comic artists to the world.

The first collaboration between Marvel and DC produces an oversized comic-book version of MGM's *Marslowe Wizard of Oz*. The second word moment in mainstream comics.

Vaughn Bodie dies of self-inflicted strangulation during a sex-thrill oct.

John Holmstrom's *Punk* magazine debuts.

Harvey Pekar's *American Splendor* #1 appears.

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Fan Mail: A Sampling

The new comic strip is ugly. There is enough ugliness in the world without wallowing in it. Charles Burns's *Big Baby* is a logical next step from Norman Dog, Lynda Barry, Matt Groening, and P.S. Mueller, and I suppose they all reflect the current condition of our society or they wouldn't be popular. But when *Big Baby* starts bringing hypodermic needles home, I hope his mom doesn't find out.

John Lee, Berkeley

I want to add my voice to all of those who have protested the inclusion of Charles Burns's *Big Baby* comic strip in your pages. It may be the finest strip in the country, but if it disturbs people, get rid of it now. If one sensitive person loses sleep over it, even for one night, it's not worth it.

Grail Mercus, Berkeley

You deserve a lot of praise for the return of Astro Boy and Speed Racer, but you should be criticized a lot for not bringing back Eighth Man, Gigantor (my personal favorite), Marine Boy, Kimba the White Lion, Princess Knight (another personal favorite), Prince Planet, the G-Force, Cyborg Big X, and the Amazing Three.

Michael Leonard, Jersey City

I know a good book has its ups and downs but you went too far this time. You let us know for sure that Rayek is dead, and to top it off, Voll is dead too. But One-Eye? No! I will never tolerate till I already ripped up #15 and I hate you forever! May the Wolfriders hate you too!

A former Elfquest reader

There are certain expressions that have long since become part of letterhacking tradition, for better or worse. I'm sure you're quite familiar with them: "The best issue yet!" "How can you top this?" "A perfect blending of words and pictures," stuff like that. Well, much as I strive for originality in my letters, I've got to admit defeat and say that *Adventures of Superman* #440 was the best issue yet, a perfect blending of words and pictures. I really don't know how you can top this!

Dale Coe, Cheshire, England

My first reaction to Jeffery Lucase's letter is, "Yes, keep the letters in categories A through E to a minimum." But on second thought, I'd like to point out that your readers/letter-writers go through stages—if they stick to reading comics long enough, that is. I don't believe one category of letter-

writers is better than any other, so not printing any letters that fit into categories A through E at all would be unfair to a large percentage of your readers.

Harry Pol, Newweigen

Avengers #289 was great. I very much enjoyed the battle between Sentry 459 and She-Hulk. I was also happy to see Namor get even with the Awesome Android. Thanks.

Wesley Umstead, Jacksonville

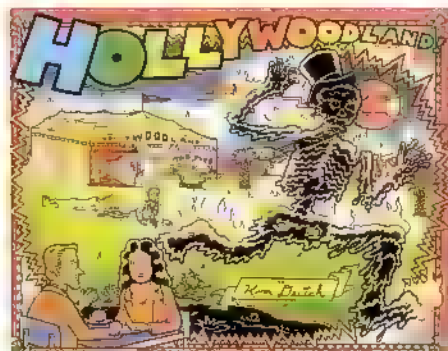
As I'm sure you remember, my last two letters have been favorable, but at the same time I've been asking (or is that nagging) you to make the book a tad more horrifying.

Yes, *Hellblazer* #6 had just the right amount of violence; the right amount of sex; the right amount of bizarre horror (he pulled out the skinheads' guts!); and a story to boot! I don't know about you, but I can detect a definite improvement between issue #1 and #6. Definitely.

Chris Romano, Pacific Palisades

Thanks a bloody bundle, mate. I was looking forward to my first trip to the U.S. this July, then I read *Swamp Thing* #71.

Eddie Maddock, Twickenham



Like Robert Crumb, Ken Deitch (left) was one of the pioneers of underground comics, a countercultural movement that, taking its cues from the first issues of *Mad* magazine, grew throughout the Sixties but faded in the pre-punk Seventies. Right: Marvel's release of the book *Akira* heralds a major jump for Japanese anime in the United States.

Japanese Comics

In Japan, reading comics is more popular than movie-going. People line up in the bookstores and at magazine racks on Sundays to read the latest inch-thick editions of their favorite *manga*, or comic book.

Traditionally, Japanese comics are lighthearted fare—boys' stories deal with school, sports, and girls (one top-rated series is called *Bebop High School*); girls' comics are usually romantic fantasies. Businessmen's comics usually depict unrepressed sex (lots of rape scenes) or leisure pastimes like golf or mah jongg.

But in the last 25 years, these comics have shifted their focus to realistic, gritty stories known as *gekiga*—literally, "theatrical picture stories." The best of these offer complex adult stories that range from Takao Saito's *Golgo 13* (a 20-year-long series about a hired assassin who emotionlessly does out a crude sort of judgment at the end of a gun) to Koike and Kojima's *Lone Wolf and Cub* (Kazure Okami) (now published here by First Comics). This Zen-like, hard-bitten tale of a masterless samurai and his toddler-son kicked off a run of film noir-ish *Samurai manga*, spiced with blood and geishas. Both stories featured a hero radically different from the American costumed sort—an outsider wrangling with a harsh world, surviving through force of will.

Science fiction *gekiga* are also breaking traditions and sales records. One of the best, Katsuhiro Otomo's *Akira*, traces a post-nuclear holocaust future through a very complex and detailed story told over 1800 pages. It is Japanese sci-fi at its best, a kind of cyberpunk, Nihon-style. Otomo is so famous that he warrants major features in magazines like the Japanese *Penthouse*. And now

Marvel is publishing *Akira* in the United States as a quality 64-page monthly.

A new generation of comic artists/writers is re-thinking comics at their core. Thus younger cabal appears in the same periodicals—*Garo* magazine (the leading cutting-edge *manga*-mag for years) and the youth-cult zine *Takarajima*—and magazine-books like the *Super Psychic Domanga Series*. Virtually all friends with each other, they form a cult of underground thoroughly Japanese in story and image, but aware of the international comics scene. Suzy Amakane and Nankin, and especially illustrator Teru Yumura (who goes under the names "Terry Johnson" and "Terry Flamingo"), employ *hetauma*—the deliberately crude or distorted style of rendering not unlike that of Americans Gary Panter and Mark Beyer—to satirize Japanese culture.

This underground goes beyond the tradition of *gekiga* into the surreal and dadaistic. In Uchida Shungiku's *At the Mercy of the Darkness*, a young boy wanders through a surreal Disneyesque land; his father is a floating eyeball. Ritsuko Hara's book, *Banana Club*, and her series, *Guide Book to Feminine Hygiene*, present a view of sex which includes the following dialogue:

PENIS: Oh, I didn't mean to wake you up.

VAGINA: It's too late. Ohh, my hymen hurts.

PENIS: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to cause you any pain.

And so on. The meanings to stories created by this arch-underground are never direct, always convoluted, and usually extreme. Like everything else Japanese.

—Brad Balfour

The Comics Journal, a scurvy fanzine that everyone loves to hate, exorcises into existence.

Superman co-creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster win recompense and recognition from National Periodical Publications for their contribution to that company's solvency.

2000 A.D., the home of Judge Dredd, released.

The National Lampoon company publishes *Heavy Metal*, the first Euro-style American comics magazine and the most revolutionary influence on American comics since the great underground renaissance.

Empire, by Samuel R. Delany and Howard Chaykin is the first "graphic novel" released by a major publisher (Berkley Books).

Because of declining sales, Warner Communications cuts back DC's titles and overhauls its distribution process; the beginning of the end to mainstream as it has been.

The Hulk, Spider-Man, and Doctor Strange become television shows. Film versions of Flash Gordon, Dick Tracy, Popeye, Conan, The Phantom, and Buck Rogers get underway.

Linda Ronstadt contributes \$1000 to help bail R. Crumb out of tax problems.

Steve Gerber sees Marvel for the rights to own his work, Howard the Duck.

Françoise Mouly and Art Spiegelman publish first issue of *Raw*. Spiegelman's *Maus* comes along with it, a tiny ball-sized booklet stapled at the center of each issue, a chapter at a time.

First East Village graffiti art gallery opens, Patti Astor's Fun Gallery—the intersection of street, music, comics, and public art.

The New Superhero

When comic superheroes first appeared in the late Thirties, in response to the rise of the Nazis, their passion for justice was both righteous and welcomed. A half century later, a superhero's obsession spills over into psychosis. Howard Chaykin understands this, maybe even better than Frank Miller (*The Dark Knight Returns*) and Alan Moore (*Watchmen*).

In his revamped versions of *Blackhawk* and *The Shadow*, Chaykin turned classic DC comic heroes into tainted, disturbed figures whose ethics adapt to the circumstances at hand. With his independently created *American Flagg*, *Times*², and his latest—the hardcore sex crime thriller, *Black Kiss*—he savages the tradition even further. A New Yorker living in Los Angeles, Chaykin transfers the transgressions of city life at its worst onto the lame fantasy of comic books. He's forcing the medium screaming into adulthood.

HOWARD CHAYKIN: I find it hard to accept the idea of a grown man running around in pants with his underwear outside and a mask and cape, fighting crime.

I don't consider the material I do all that anti-heroic. My characters don't stand around striking heroic poses and waiting for something dramatic to happen. Heroes are normal, average, cowardly guys, who are thrust into circumstances that they have no other control of except to rise to heroic states. What I feel that I do rather than providing antiheroes or anti-antiheroes is give a small, venal, petty human scale to these people. I find it impossible to write a particularly heroic character who is morally superior to me. For example, while I was smoking cigarettes I couldn't have written a character who didn't smoke. Comic book fans have a hard time with my stuff because my characters tend to react to situations in far more real ways than in comic book ways. The comic book reader has a very proscribed idea as to how heroes behave. It comes back to Raymond Chandler's line about Alan Ladd: "A small boy's idea of a tough guy."

And you twist around that?

I twist around it and dance around it. The comic book reader tends to believe that power generally creates good, and you know full well that the necessary flip of power is corruption. You stirred things up when you hinted at a blowjob scene in *Blackhawk*.

It is astounding to me that the audience would be surprised that a character like *Blackhawk*—who is approximately 30 years old, living in the middle of the Second World War—should have a sex life.

You've done some interesting twists and turns on standards and conventions.

I assumed that as I got older and became interested occasionally in sexually-oriented material, readers my age would too. One of the amazing things to discover is that the audience remains titillated by violence and embarrassed by sex. I mean, there's no problem with characters blowing away bad guys because they think they have a right to. But the idea of characters having sex is anathema to these people.

With the *Black Kiss* I'm trying to do a contemporary, conventional-looking crime, horror, erotic story that's unsettling. And I don't mean unsettling in terms of creeping dread, because creeping dread doesn't unsettle me. Audiences want someone to say that everything is okay, or that everything sucks, so they can complain like adolescents. I'm offering a third view that says that everything is not okay, but everything isn't so bad, and basically you shuffle along and that this is what being an adult is all about, growing up. How much of this stuff is really you, especially *Black Kiss*? It's all about my own terrors and my own dread. I live in stark terror of just about everything.

—Bred Belfour



Illustration by Howard Chaykin. Art by J. J. Beck, collected with permission.

EC great Wally Wood, now a bitter and disturbed man, blows his brains out.

Jack Kirby asks Marvel for the return of his pages of original art—something like 13,000 pages, of which 2,500 were covers. "The House of Ideas" stalls.

Crumb launches *Weirdo*, an (alleged) quarterly anthology that will return some of the wacky spirit to the moribund underground scene.

First special rock issue of *Heavy Metal*.

The *Heavy Metal* movie is made, a flawed but bold vision of film animation based on comics.

S. Clay Wilson's first gallery exhibit.

The downtown Whitney Museum branch has a major comic art show.

Gary Foster's *Jimbo* released in Japan.

Frank Miller's *Ronin* marks the Miller version of the comic universe, one right out of Philip K. Dick and Japanese comics.

Peter Bogge takes over editing of *Weirdo* (with #10) from an exhausted Crumb.

Liberators' first *Ranter* book published in US.

Marvel offers Jack Kirby a retroactive work-for-hire deal that would give him no creator-credit or ownership of any of the characters he helped launch. He rejects offer.

First issue of *Mic A* appears; story by Dean Motter, adopted and drawn by Hernandez Brothers (*Love and Rockets*).

Los Bros Magnificos

It's been a long time since a comic book reached out and grabbed me by the cajones. In fact, I remember the last time. It was 1968, and a friend from San Francisco sent me the adventures of the Checkered Demon from Zap Comix. It wasn't even the book, it was xeroxed. It didn't matter—I was struck dumb. Totally awestruck. I had never seen anything like it but I knew I needed to get my hands on more.

Well, it's been a long dry spell in between. Sure, there have been close calls and undoubtedly there have been some great talents working the territory, but the majority of comics seem based on the three Zs. As in naptime. Z-z-z.

Then a friend south of San Francisco sends me *Love and Rockets*. Yikes! Chicano lesbian punkers trying to brass their way past the bouncers and onto the guest list. What? No Gotham City? No super-powered dildoheads? Hey, this hit me where I live—literally. I live in the Southwest. Some of my best ex-friends are Chicano lesbian punkers. This is real stuff.

These people exist, *es verdad*. Don't ask me to bio these bros who draw this great stuff, be-

cause I'm just your basic fan. I guess there's three of them—Jaime, Gilbert, and Mario, but then they sometimes sign their work with "Beto" or "Xaime." All you need to know is one of them draws real clean (kind of a cross between Dennis the Menace and Gasoline Alley) but it's the dialogue and the narrative that blow you away. Just when you expect the punchline, it's not there. Just when you expect the soft fuzzy world of comics, you get hard reality.

I guess Jaime draws the Mechanics series. And the women are so fine, so rich. Even the fat ones. You'll love 'em. Also, check out all the vatos and barria horn dogs in the backgrounds. Oh, does he nail 'em!

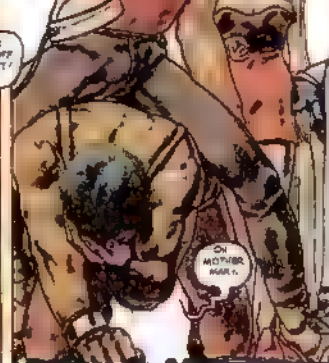
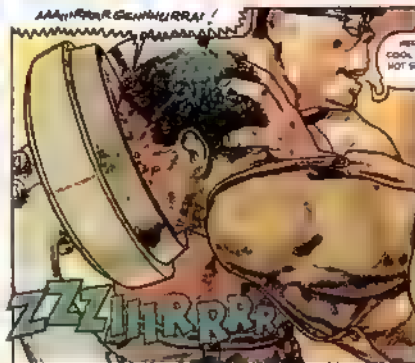
But I gotta tell you my all-time favorite. This one is in *Love and Rockets*, Book Three, and it's by Gilbert. It's called "Act of Contrition" and it's about this *chicana* named Luba who has four kids (by different fathers) and huge—no, make that mega—chi-chis. Now, I know what you're thinking. You're going, "Big deal. What comic strip heroine DOESN'T have big chi-chis?" But Luba's breasts are more like mutations. You

know, huge to the point of being cumbersome. It's sexy, but you kind of feel sorry for her. If you saw her on the street you might offer to help carry one. I would. Anyway, the rich part is this old acquaintance of hers, a guy named Archie, is back in town and the locals think he's cool 'cause he drives a Corvair. Is that great? And what's even greater is that he looks like a guy who would drive a Corvair!! But what's even more amazing is you can't help but like the guy. He's a mortician who lives with his mother and, swear to *Jesús Cristo*, you're going to feel for him. Luba and Archie go dancing and she flirts with everybody and when they leave, he can't even get a green card on her. I'm not going to ruin it for you but when they finally get down, it makes for some of the sexiest, most moving panels ever done in comics—with the possible exception of the one sequence where longtime L&R heroines Hopey and Maggie accidentally get it on, in some story in another *Love and Rockets* I couldn't find, but you will. You have to. Los Bros Hernandez are *muy magnifico*.

—Bob Boze Bell



Clockwise: *Blood*, J.D. Matteis's metaphysical, hallucinatory tale of vampirism, with beautiful, erotic watercolor art by Kent Williams; *Tanino Liberatore's* decadent, Blade Runner-ish *Ranxerox*, in which an amoral cyborg negotiates his way through a violent future; *Akira*, the Japanese vision of cyberpunk. In a post-nuclear future, kids with psychic powers are caught between fascist and rebel forces.



Harvey Pekar goes on *Late Night* with David Letterman and gives David a hard time, America loves him.

The first *Watchmen* comic appears. Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons re-think comic book storytelling as a thesis on semantics and comics.

153 cartoon/comics pros sign petition demanding Marvel act decently to Jack Kirby.

Frank Miller's landmark reworking of Batman as a crazed vigilante, *The Dark Knight Returns*, appears.

Marvel agrees to give Jack Kirby back 2,100 pages of not-exactly-prime Kirby art, in exchange for which they get to keep their copyrights and ownership of *Ultimate*. Sounds fair, eh?

First Comics publishes *Lone Wolf and Cub*, launching translations of quality adult Japanese comics in America.

Book edition of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* published by Pantheon. Sells like hell.

Warner Books puts entire 12-issue run of Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' *Watchmen* into a trade paperback. Doesn't quite sell as good as they'd like.

Friendly Frank's comic store in suburban Chicago found guilty of selling obscene materials (*Weirdo*, *Bizarre Sex*, *Omaha the Cat Dancer*). They are fined \$750 by judge.

Lorenzo Mattotti's book *Fines* published by Catalan; he is the current top gun of Italian comics.

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Crowded Houses

The second album

TEMPLES of LOW MEN

Featuring the hit single

"Better Be Home Soon"

and

"When You Come"

"I Feel Possessed"

"Never Be The Same"

"Into Temptation"



Produced by Mitchell Froom

Management: Gary Numan



on high-quality 180 gram vinyl

2 record and compact disc



Material chronology prawem autorship



Hendy Gibbs

boat anchor technology for ten thousand genuine All-American 1988 bucks. Back to the Future goes Back to the Factory.

Meanwhile, those Jap superbikes, the nasty Nijjas and Suzukis and such, are too wild for words—numbers will have to suffice: zero to sixty in under three seconds. Three seconds—uno, dos, tres. Guys have been shot out of cannons slower than that. They're so quick that nobody over 18 who's ever felt the least tiny twinge of fear is capable of cranking the throttle back all the way. Plus, you can buy them used at incredibly reasonable prices—look for the classified ads that read like this:

KZ-1000 for sale. CHEAP. Ridden only one time. Am devoting remainder of life to serving merciful Jesus.

Of course when someone does lose it while cranking their superbike full on, the authorities usually have a terrible time identifying the remains. There's so much plastic involved, and the rate of speed was usually so awe-inspiringly illegal that all that's left is a small pile of plastic shreds too small to use as poker chips and maybe the left side of an entire human body (helmet intact), with the other side just sort of power-sanded off. Riders fortunate enough to survive usually seem to wander off into the woods and are never known to speak English again.

Sadly, the superbikes have begun to bust up once happy biker-lifestyle families. After years and years of blissful bike family togetherness, the day comes when young Gypsy Joker Junior parks his shiny new red plastic superbike out on the greasy front lawn next to the old man's prized Panhead, and old GJ Senior about has a heart attack. (When they give him CPR, the T-shirt they yank off says "I'd Rather Push a Harley than Ride a Riceburner.")

Old illusions die hard, and old Harleys die when they're too cold or too hot or the mix is too rich or too lean or the gap is just a blonde pubic hair off or just 'cause they're in a bad mood. You can't kill the mystique, however, and when you ride as hard as the Hollywood bad boys, the only thing that happens when you dump it is your retro-hog dents up the asphalt pretty bad. Besides, if they scratch up their chrome, they just threaten to go out and buy themselves a scary plastic superbike—the real two-wheel rock 'n' roll of today—and their manager races out to buy 'em a fresh new shiny Harley softie. Works every time.

—Bart Bull

BIKERS AND PIKERS

Consider the beautiful bike boys of Hollywood. They neither spin brodies, nor do they weave through traffic. No, the beauty bikers prefer parking outside the more exclusive nightclubs, preening and pouting and practicing their sneers and using their brand new retro-Harleys as chrome-plated bus benches.

What happens when Charlie Sexton's half-ton hog falls off the kickstand and onto the sidewalk? Is it his road manager's job to pick it up or does his mom have to do it? If Billy Idol or Steve Jones or Leif Garrett need a tune-up, do they dare risk getting greasy? If they do, how many hair stylists should their publicists have on hand for the photo opportunity? And can any of the beauty bikers ever hope to be as mean 'n' macho as bad Mickey Rourke, unofficial chapter prez of the Heck's Angels, H'wood?

Harley-Davidson didn't need the cutey-pie pretend bikers to make their contemporary products look ludicrous—the Japanese superbikes have been doing that for most of this decade. While Harley mostly manufactures new marketing deals, licensing the logo for wine coolers and sunglasses and stereo systems, its biggest innovation in the back half of the century has been the so-called "Heritage Soft-Tail." Now any bucks-up rock star runt can purchase genuine All-American 1949



Chris Carroll

Top: Nine little bad boys all in a row. Opposite: Beauty biker Charlie Sexton knows how to play dead—lie on your back, arms outstretched. It roughs up the leather and saves the belt buckle. Instant cool.

BIKEOLOGY

There are those who would say that bikers are illiterate slobs, reeking of sin and grease and degradation. Not us. We know some bikers who can read. In fact, Chris Pfouts and David Snow, editors of *Iron Horse* magazine, the *Atlantic Monthly* of biker rags, recently presented their readers with a survey of preferred tomes from the lengthy annals of the literatoredom. This is BIKER LIT 101

Biker Lit? Hell yeah—some of it's great, some's shitty, but all of it is interesting to anybody into two-wheelers. If you are interested in finding any of the books listed here, don't call us. You're on your own. It's like chasing down a special part: secondhand bookshops, garage sales, flea markets and junkshops are good places to scout. Then there's the libraries. Certain nameless souls have been known to glom books that catch their wandering eyes at their local library. It's despicable, irresponsible, and antisocial, but it happens. (Most cycle books can be found under sociology, current affairs, transportation, or sports categories.)

It's no accident that most of these books were written over a generation ago. There was quite a splash made back in the mid-Sixties when a host of different subcultures, offbeat characters, and a few genuinely legendary figures intersected at various points across America. The splash didn't last long but the ripples are only fading now in the stagnant Eighties.

ACROSS AMERICA BY MOTORCYCLE BY C.K. SHEPHERD

At the end of World War I, the young Britisher Cyril K. Shepherd was mustered out with no woman in particular, no special place to go, and a lively amount of whip-out. After bullshitting with a young American soldier, he decided to come to the States, buy himself a bike, and ride the sucker across the country, New York to LA. Cyril bought a Henderson four-cylinder, one of the finest bikes of the day, and proceeded to beat the living ca-ca out of the thing on his cross-country jaunt.

In one episode, out in Bumfuck (a third of a mile from Noplace), he shattered his front piston. Ol' C.K. dug around and got the big pieces out, then whittled himself a piece of apple branch and stuffed it in the wristpin hole to keep the rod straight, and went rocking on. Altogether, by the time he made it to the West Coast, he'd gone through five cylinders, three pistons, five wristpins,



Hunter S. Thompson

three complete bearing sets, two rods, and eleven spark plugs. He fell off 142 times before he quit counting.

The book well, it's pretty rare. I got this copy from a used bookstore about fifteen years ago. It cost five bucks. Some months after that, I paid five bucks for an Excelsior frame, tank, and rear fender that was lying in a farm ditch. I sold the Excelsior and kept the book. Maybe my priorities are screwed up, but it looks like it worked out okay. I never would have built the Ex, but I read the book about once a year.

HELL'S ANGELS BY HUNTER S. THOMPSON

This is easily the most famous and important book in the bunch. Thompson's history of the Hells Angels from 1950 to 1965 and his account of the events that brought them to the forefront of the national press has had an influence on motorcycling and popular culture that'll probably never be accurately measured or fully appreciated. At the time that Thompson wrote *Hell's Angels* the club had no chapters outside of California, and only seven throughout the state itself. The sole biker-type flick that anyone was familiar with was *The Wild One*

and that had been released ten years earlier. Outlaw and custom riders made up far less than the traditional one percent disowned by the American Motorcycle Association, and the whole scene was about as far removed from mainstream American life as Martian volcanoes.

Now let's step forward twenty years and check out what's happened. *Hell's Angels* is in its 25th printing. The Hells Angels have chapters all over. Would-be outlaw motorcycles are being mass-produced at the factories of all the major bike companies except BMW. The motorcycle outlaw as a stock celluloid image is as much an institution to the average American as the Cowboy, the Tough Detective, or the Dumb Blonde. The outlaw biker image, as purely an American phenomenon as rock 'n' roll, has been adapted, emulated, and imitated by thousands of folks in foreign countries who've never encountered an American highway except in books and movies and magazines.

It's pretty fuckin' amazing if you think about it. Before the mid-Sixties, the outlaw scene was a strange, exotic subculture rarely encountered by the majority of Americans, and now you've got

Continued on page 69

GY

1

Bikers—
everybody
talks
about 'em,
but nobody
wants
to tell them
about their
breath.

0

1



Heidi Gibbs

EAT A PEACH: SIX NOTORIOUS MOTORCYCLE DUMP INCIDENTS

Rider: HUNTER S. THOMPSON

Date: December, 1965

Bike: BSA Lightning Rocket

Cir/Loc: Wet road, high-sided off highway, south of Oakland, CA

Result: Passenger hospitalized; HST (as ever) remarkably unscathed

Rider: BOB DYLAN

Date: July, 1966

Bike: Triumph Bonneville

Cir/Loc: Wet grass in backyard (Dylan says: highway oil slick); Woodstock, NY

Result: Saw God for the first of several times; chastened, he records *John W. Harding*

Rider: DUANE ALLMAN

Date: October, 1971

Bike: Custom Harley Chopper

Cir/Loc: Meets automobile at intersection in Macon, GA

Result: R.I.P. (Allman Brothers Band continues w/o replacement)

Rider: BERRY OAKLEY

Date: October, 1972

Bike: Custom Harley Chopper

Cir/Loc: Meets automobile at intersection in Macon, GA

Result: R.I.P. (Allman Brothers Band gets new bass player)

Rider: EVEL KNEVEL

Date: August, 1974

Bike: Rocket-assisted Harley

Cir/Loc: "Attempt" to "jump" Snake River Canyon, ID

Result: Dumps bike in river, parachutes safely free; takes up oil painting

Rider: MALCOLM FORBES

Date: Too numerous to mention

Bike: Harley-Davidson Sturgis

Cir/Loc: Montana, Manhattan; China; Russia; etc.

Result: Buys a fresh one; has great stories for dates with Elizabeth Taylor

—Bart Bull

BIKERS

Names

Bear
Spider
Preacher
Insane

Idols

Charlie Daniels
David Allan Coe
Hank Williams, Jr.
Jack Daniels

Girlfriend Names

Brandi
Breezi
Windi
Stormi
Traci

Beer of Choice

Budweiser

Subscribes to:

Biker Lifestyle
Iron Horse

Favorite Three

Initials
FTW

Favorite Dennis

Hopper Movie
Easy Rider



Heidi Gibbs

Names

Charlie Sexton
Mickey Rourke
Steve Jones
Nicholas Cage

Idols

Charlie Sexton
Mickey Rourke
Steve Jones
Nicholas Cage

Girlfriend Names

Dominique
Cassandra
Simone
Monique
Francesca

Beer of Choice

Corona

Subscribes to:

Billboard
Hollywood Reporter

Favorite Three

Initials
SRO

Favorite Dennis

Hopper Movie
Blue Velvet



Heidi Gibbs

PIKERS

—Michael
Corcoran

Group therapy.



Keep hearing sounds
in your head? Feel-
ing beats deep
inside you?

Then it's time
you worked it out. With Casio.

Our electronic instru-
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you need. For you to find
yourself. Or lose yourself in
the music.

Take our new MT-240
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sound's so real, it's life-
size. It lets go with up to
210 different tones, 20
auto-rhythms, on-board
stereo speakers, and MIDI
compatibility. A very
mean board.

Ear-opening lead
rides start with Casio DG-
series guitars. Not to men-
tion the other moving
music their presets and
auto-rhythms put out. With
built-in speakers and nylon
strings that are always in
tune, they put on one
outrageous show.

For a beat that'll set
your heart racing, put the
MT-520 on drums. Eight
built-in drum pads let you
pound out percussion
your way.

And when it comes to
horns, the Casio DH-100 will
blow you away. Its mouthpiece
is sensitive to your every breath
and its keys to your every touch.
The DH-100 belts out six different
sounds, has a built-in speaker
and MIDI to let you control other
instruments. Quite a blast.

If music's an obsession
for you, there's only one pre-
scription. Casio.

CASIO

Where miracles never cease

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Musical instruments



THIS BOTTLE OF BEER COST \$50 MILLION.

Why have we spent \$50 million to develop Miller Genuine Draft?

Because we've always believed in making every effort to produce the best tasting bottle of beer. So we took a long, hard look at how a beer is made.

Most beers are heat-pasteurized. And that can affect a beer's taste.

But Miller Genuine Draft isn't heat-pasteurized. It's cold-filtered™.

We spent a lot of time and effort to develop the cold-filtered™ process.

It's an exclusive method that doesn't alter the rich, smooth, pure taste of beer.

Cold-filtered™ Miller Genuine Draft. What our \$50 million buys you is a beer that's as real as it gets.

AS REAL AS IT GETS.



Pat MacDonald, dressed in his wife's bathrobe, pulls a wayward strand of brown hair across his forehead, tucks it behind his right ear, and walks into the kitchen of his South Austin, Texas, home. Barbara, the other half of Timbuk 3, is already making a breakfast of scrambled eggs and home fries with the skins still on, just the way they ought to be. It's quiet in the big suburban house. Jim and Linda Welsh, the other couple sharing the place, took Pat and Barbara's four-year-old, Devin, and their own, Evan, to the Montessori preschool first thing in the morning, and don't have to pick them up for a few hours yet. Pat fills a mug with cold water, drops in a tea bag from one of a half dozen pastel boxes of Celestial Seasonings herbal tea, and puts the mug in the microwave.

It's only Tuesday morning, so there's still time to decide what to do with the free ad that the *Austin Chronicle* owes Timbuk 3. Pat thinks maybe they should donate it to the local chapter of the Green Party. All rule out the idea of using it to promote *Eden Alley*, Timbuk 3's new album. In this house my own cynicism, the cause of my fall from liberal-left grace, seems both out of place and forgiven.

The morning eases on with a spirit of countercultural propriety, and it feels just like home.

I like to envision an afterlife in which the virtuous drive enormous pink Cadillacs, use hundred-dollar bills to light their cigars, and get lavish blowjobs from buxom women with biblical names. In the hereafter, as I see it, the righteous recline, Greenpeace button in lapel, on crimson waterbeds, rising only to inhale a line or inherit a rent-controlled apartment. While the Wicked spend eternity removing gender specificity from the canon of world literature (Edwin Meese: Shouldn't this read, "'(wo)man' is a social/political animal"? George Steinbrenner: I think "person" sounds so much more compassionate, don't you?), the Good—citizens against colonization, and everyone who refuses to play Sun City—enjoy really incredible cuts of meat in the luxury of their jacuzzis. Their baseball team goes 162-0, winning every game in the ninth inning when their routine grounders take bad hops. The Wicked deal folk art from the developing world, at cost, and name their cats Chairman Meow.

It looks like a nice day outside the MacDonalds' home, and you can see a couple raw acres of it through the sliding glass doors that make up one wall of the living room. With its swimming pool on the deck just outside, the house seems like a fantasy home, but geared to someone else's fantasy. When Pat and Barbara moved to Austin from Madison, Wisconsin, to sing in the streets for donations, they'd lived in a kind of shanty town on the outskirts of the city. Now, following a couple of flukes—the capper being "The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades," an ironic antinuclear song that became a hit in part because so few people recognized it as such—they live in uneasy luxury, *Progressive* subscribers in a seat of decadence. They walk through the house's mirrored rooms almost apologetically, and worry that if I mention the pool, people will think they live in Graceland or something. It was bad enough that Miles Copeland, chairperson of I.R.S. records, using them to illustrate the changing values of rock stars, boasted that they'd bought this chunk of hillside equity for their own. (They rent, and the pool is fairly modest.) But the place has great privacy, lots of room, and

we are the world

Timbuk 3: Not just a great band. A great excuse to consider those wacky, guilt-ridden, always funny folks, the Liberals.

Article by John Leland

Photography by Jeff Baker

allows them to share with another family. "We always used to live communally, before we had Devin," Barbara says

Leaving Pat and Barbara aside for the moment, there's still this question of the afterlife, eternity, the hereafter, the great beyond. My vision may sound unorthodox, but—and here's where it wows the natural fiber pants off my spiritual brethren—it is exceptionally democratic and egalitarian. In contrast to your classic schemes—Virgil's, Dante's, Milton's—this is eternity as the virtuous would have it. For what righteous soul—what punk for peace, or opponent of CIA recruiting on campus—could enjoy his/her final reward knowing that elsewhere the less fortunate were roasting in hellfire? It wouldn't take long before someone silk-screened a T-shirt with the cry, "What if they gave an eternal damnation and nobody came?" and unrest began to foment. The classic schemes may sell books, but as theology, forget it.



The alternatives to these schemes, it seems, boil down to either everlasting, universal torment or across-the-board, non-stop good times. The first is an ordeal. The second, for the righteous, the concerned, the grassroots coalition of solidarity organizations most qualified to draft the agenda for a new millennium, is unthinkable. It would mean seeing the good fortune of their neighbors without being in a position to begrudge it. This is eternal agony. The one prospect less endurable than galaxy-wide suffering is galaxy-wide fun. Everybody must pay

A mile or two south from where a now half-vacant office building replaced Timbuk 3's favorite Mexican food stand, the bartender at Big Mamou declares last call. A few years ago Austin was a boomtown, with money pouring in from Houston, Dallas, and parts more distant. But when oil prices dropped, the city, like the rest of Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas, fell into an undeclared recession; the glassy new commercial buildings downtown now house expensive, never-used offices.

At Big Mamou, a few dozen people take the bartender's words to heart, exchanging crumpled bills for those final rounds of Shiner beer. Tuesday is hootenanny night, and a man with an acoustic guitar and long white hair uses his five minutes on the

microphone to adapt the "Green Acres" theme song to the tune of "A Day in the Life." Later he'll admit to Pat and Barbara, in the excitement of meeting them, that the idea wasn't really his own. Honest to a fault.

The crowd seems respectable for this early in the week, but Big Mamou is really surviving the economic crunch on the strength of its restaurant. The scene here is a little funny. For all the clubs and, in recent years, media attention, even the popular local bands have to hold day jobs. "When we came down here," says Pat, "there were two kinds of bands in Austin. There were the bands that would play one set in the showcase kind of clubs, and there would be four bands on the bill. There's more press there, but you don't make any money. And then there were the bands that played cover tunes, and they'd play in a bar all night long. We, always making our living playing music, had to pursue the gigs in bars playing three sets in order to make our \$100 for the night."

Onstage, there's a delay between acts, and the bartender/emcee looks to the crowd for help, or maybe just sympathy. Pat says something to Barbara and the two bound onto the stage excitedly. "Well we were raised," they sing, without accompaniment, stretching the syllables as far as they'll go, "in Eden Alley/Where the music plays all night long/And children make love in the shadows/While the elders pray for kingdom come." It isn't really gospel, as they'd suggested earlier, or at least it isn't good gospel, but it is good: fresh, clear, with a force beyond its own piety. It fixes everyone in the club.

Later, on the way home, Barbara explains. "Eden Alley: it's not really Eden and it's not really an alley. Everybody's always faced with challenges every day, to do this or not do this, to do the right thing. The characters in a lot of the songs feel comfortable in Eden Alley, comfortable with their character flaws. It's like when we were faced with the prospect of doing 'Solid Gold.' We didn't really want to do it, but... That's our little place in Eden Alley."

Ah, liberalism, the Puritanism of the Eighties. It's become a prohibition against the pleasures of excess, a nasty defense mechanism for badly dressed unsigned bands. It gave us the responsible branch of punk rock, like the Clash, only to take them away again—not because they stopped making good

songs, but because, according to the betrayed, they started acting like self-indulgent rock stars.

Have so many millions of our parents' tuition dollars really amounted to so little: to cowardly jibes at "consumer culture," and prudish rock idols like Morrissey, Sting, and R.E.M.? Was all of it—the Eugene McCarthy rallies, the brown rice, the semiotics classes—just so we could act superior to people with money and/or trendy hair? [Note to self: consider your own hair, while it lasts, ha ha.—jml, b'klyn, '88] And while we're at it, couldn't we at least look like the beautiful mother from "Family Ties," instead of the balding father? These are the hard times for liberals.

But despite it all, aren't we still right? Even though our comedians aren't funny and our bands insist on trying to play reggae, aren't we better human beings than the people who invest in South Africa? Aren't we, each and every one of us, even those who occasionally pass along politically incorrect jokes or wear leather sneakers—aren't we morally superior to Jimmy the Greek and the people who smoke in crowded elevators? Isn't secular humanism god's gift to (wo)mankind?

We've shown concern even when we've had no interest at stake. We've played benefit concerts with no satellite hookup. We've denounced major labels, our potential benefactors, in fanzine interviews. We've let flaxen-haired women in peasant dresses and no bras use our mimeograph machines. We gave the world hanging plants and Swiss water decaf, and we're just about mad enough to demand them back!

Pat MacDonald fidgets with one of the kids' non-violent toys, a kind of splashier Etch A Sketch filled with black goo. Eyes glued to the toy, he worries that the new album might be too accusing. "Sometimes I use the word 'you,'" he says. "I think the first record had a lot more 'I' and 'we.' I'd feel bad if the wrong people thought that the songs were directed at them. There's certain people who should feel better about who they are, and what they are. There's certain people who need confidence just to carry on. And then there's other people who need to be woke up. It's kind of like firing a gun into a crowd to wake people up. Sometimes the bullets are gonna hit the wrong people. I'm a little worried about that."

"I'm not, really," says Barbara.

"Well, that's good."

As we get closer, the afterlife begins to look a little grisly. The Good and Wicked inflict their idea of good fortune, each upon the other, without mercy: Citizens in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador sip blender drinks in their Montserrat villas while their lawyers dispense with the lawsuits coming in from Bhopal... Donald Trump's roommate tapes yet another unfunny installment of Nicole Hollander's Sylvia strip to the refrigerator... Jane Fonda coerces her sweaty gardener into her satin J.P. Stevens sheets... the Boston Celtics (except for Bill Walton) tell their parents they're joining the Peace Corps, then change their minds because "it's been like totally co-opted by the CIA"... Paul Newman inherits the Nestlé fortune... the contras buy Emma Goldman postcards from feminist book collectives and discuss hip hop as postmodern art... the Sierra Club objectifies women... agribusiness magnates wean their dogs to vegetarian diets under their geodesic dome roofs... rock critics make big-budget videos with the directors of TV commercials. We are the world, but this is hell.

[Note to self: send note to Pat & B, say it's okay to enjoy their house. Also, the record's great.—jml, b'klyn, '88]

A cowboy wearing a white shirt, brown pants, and a white cowboy hat is riding a dark brown horse. The horse is facing left. The background is a blurred, golden-brown field. In the foreground, two packs of Marlboro Lights cigarettes are visible. The pack on the left is white with a gold band and the text "Marlboro LIGHTS". The pack on the right is white with a gold band and the text "Marlboro LIGHTS 100%".

Marlboro Lights



SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.

Holder of a Boulder

O

n his last time at bat against rookie John Farrell on Wednesday, August 26, of last year, Paul Molitor of the Milwaukee Brewers reached first base on an error by Cleveland first baseman Pat Tabler. The Brewers won the game in the tenth inning, 1-0, with Molitor in the on-deck circle, his hitting streak broken at 39 consecutive games. The Yankees, still barely in the pennant race, used the day off to trade their best pitcher for a player who wouldn't be with the team by the time it reconvened the next spring.


Just north of the idle Yankee Stadium, in the steep hills of the southwest Bronx, the late summer temperatures hovered lazily around 80 degrees in the thick, still air. Scotty Morris, manager of the rap crew Boogie Down Productions, spent the day out of doors, separated from the keys to his Finley Avenue apartment by six flights of stairs and two locked doors. The crew's deejay, Scott Sterling, or Scott La Rock, negotiated the heat in a running suit with short pants and a pair of Nike Air Jordans. He'd left his job as a social worker at the Franklin Armory Men's Shelter in April, and had the day free.

It was an exciting time for La Rock. The day before, he'd proposed to Deatema Brown, who had for a long time been like a mother to Scott La Rock, Jr. On his record cover and in raps, he called his son "my pride and joy." La Rock's own mother had never wanted him to become a musician. After he returned from Castleton State College in Vermont in 1984, with a degree in business administration, she'd wanted him to pursue a career at the homeless shelter, or else become a police officer. "When I was a kid," he'd told me two months before, "I'd ride my little purple bike down to Cedar Park, wait for motherfuckers to start shooting. Kool Herc used to jam in the nighttime, no lights in the park. You was out there on your own. My mother caught me out there, she would beat my ass." A neighborhood

Article by John Leland

Photography by Jodi Buren

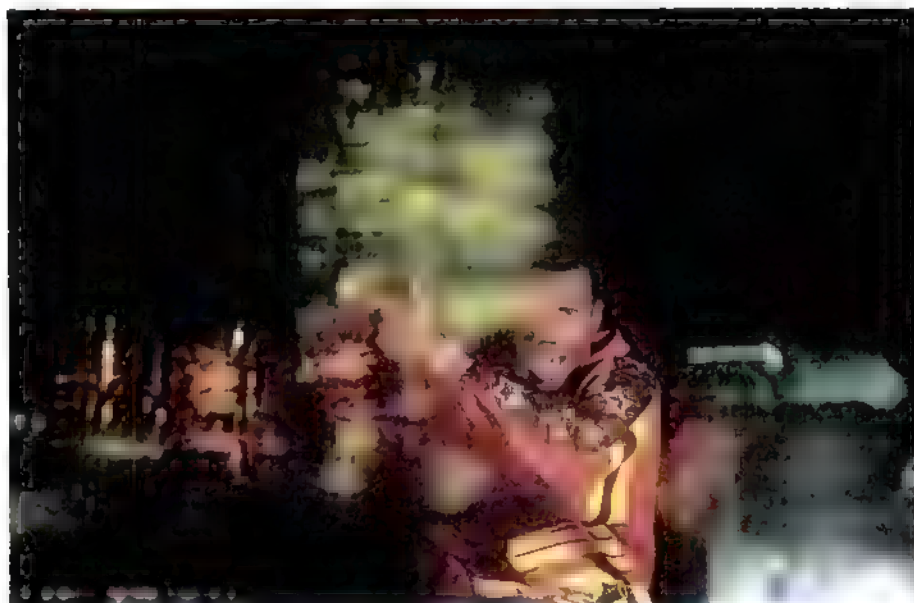




Everybody pays dues. But not everybody leaves home at age 13 to live on the subway. And not everybody endures, on the brink of success, the violent death of his partner. KRS-One of Boogie Down Productions has endured to become one of the wisest, dopest voices in hip hop.

Ms. Melodie and KRS-One

He slept on park benches after he discovered that sleeping on the grass meant waking up soaked with dew. In winter, he learned to judge wind patterns and huddled in the park's open structures.



basketball star, he called himself La Rock because the player who scored the most points in a game was said to have rocked it, rocked the party. His closest adolescent friends were T La Rock and Coca La Rock. His mother had discouraged him when, in February, 1985, he began supplementing his income from the shelter by deejaying at the Broadway International rap club in Harlem. Now his album, *Criminal Minded*, was on its way to selling 330,000 copies, and the crew was about to perform at Madison Square Garden.

"You can't lay around and hope," he'd told me as he set up his turntables in an airless rehearsal studio. "Hope for what? God gave you a chance, put you in a life, now it's up to you to maintain it." By this time, La Rock knew the crew would probably never receive any royalties from *Criminal Minded*, but he was more philosophical than bitter. "I had a great paying job, 23 thousand a year. Left my job because I love rap music. It's not no dream, I know I'm good. I'm in control of my own destiny. We're self-contained businessmen. We're young entrepreneurs. You listen to our album I'm not try-

ing to brag, but do you really think there's a better album out there than ours?"

Derek Jones spent August 26 hanging out on his stoop, looking at the overlapping potholes that make up Woodycrest Avenue, and talking to friends. Jones, a 16-year-old rapper who called himself D-Nice, had met La Rock in early 1986 through a mutual friend who worked as a security guard at the shelter. The day they met, La Rock took D-Nice to a store called Dr. J's and bought him a pair of sneakers. In conversation, La Rock usually referred to D-Nice as his younger brother.

In the summer of 1986, D-Nice had called a girl from the neighborhood. He already had a girlfriend, but this other girl had insisted on giving him her number. Her boyfriend answered the telephone and threatened to kill him if they ever crossed paths. A year later, on August 26, 1987, around seven in the evening, they did. As D-Nice was walking across 166th Street between Ogden

and Summit Avenues, two men stopped him. As he remembers, "One of them said, 'Yeah, you the kid I was talking to on the phone, I said I was gonna do you.' I was like, 'Come on, man, who are you?' I never even saw the guy before. He said, 'Yo, I should shoot you now.' So he pulled his little gun out or whatever. But he didn't use it. And he walked away."

Lawrence Krsna Parker spent the evening of August 26 in front of the television with his new wife, Ramona. In 1984, Parker, a graphic arts student, painted a panel truck to look like a bread truck, and drove upstate with a friend to harvest three bushels of wild marijuana. As they were re-entering the Castle Hill section of the Bronx, a cop noticed a broken taillight on the van. When he finished his 60-day stint in the Bronx House of Detention, he went to live in the Franklin Armory Men's Shelter. Three months later, La Rock started working there.

A formidable red brick armory in the Morrisania section of the Bronx, the shelter announces its presence to the community with signs reading, THIS IS A MILITARY INSTALLATION and WARNING. Across the

street, the residents of the shelter share the Hines Playground with students from the abutting St. Augustine's Parochial School. Inside, most of the 688 men sleep side by side on the main drill floor. "Scott came in," Parker remembers, "in the suit, the tie, bellbottoms, briefcase. He had a new job." The two became friends and formed Boogie Down Productions, with La Rock as deejay and the newly christened Blastmaster KRS-One as rapper, while Parker was still living in the shelter. They took their name from their neighborhood, the boogie down Bronx.

"I had my own crew there in the shelter," Parker says. "In a shelter, unity is strength. Not too much intelligence, because the majority of the people are not intelligent. You had gangsters and criminals, murderers, drug dealers, and their idea of survival was just that: knock off the next man, sell your drugs over here, steal, gunpoint robberies."

"I had slept next to murderers, and they were telling me, 'I killed a man, but I'm trying to rehabilitate myself and worship Jesus.' And I knew these people were crazy out of their head. But I was like, 'I understand that very well, and it's not right to kill, but if you have to. . . .' And it was, 'Yes, I think I had to, this guy was really trying to get on my nerves.'"

"A lot of times people in my crew would get in an argument with people from another crew, and it would start riots. And Scott would come out, being down with my crew, 'Yo, we got to chill.' He started coming in jeans and sneakers and a T-shirt and gold, and he started looking like the hip hop gangster. The shelter respected it as a people. Scott was loved by millions of people, so whenever there was riots in the shelters, they had to call on Scott to calm the whole thing down, because he knew both sides of the turf."

In the rehearsal studio, KRS-One had stood as tall as La Rock, a big, affable man who peeled and ate a mango before getting ready to rap. He spoke in long gulps, enunciating his words with exaggerated precision and laughing with everything he or anybody else said. Less than a year later, in my apartment, I apologize before asking him if it is true that he killed the people who shot La Rock on August 26.

At some time on August 26, Scotty Morris hung from a rope six stories above Finley Avenue. At the other end of the rope, lowering him from the roof to the window of his locked apartment, were La Rock and two friends named McBoo and Darryl Bolden. McBoo was D-Nice's deejay; Bolden handled security for Boogie Down Productions' performances. They all called him Robocop, partly because of the way he beat people up at the Latin Quarter rap club in Manhattan. He claimed to be a cop, but he never let anyone look at his badge too closely. After the guy pulled the gun on 166th Street, D-Nice called La Rock, looking for Robocop.

"They didn't come till like three-and-a-half hours later," D-Nice remembers. "At first I was like, 'Nah, forget it, man, we ain't even gotta go over there.' I figured it was over with. So Scott was like, 'If you let them do it one time, they gonna do it again and again and again. Let's go over there, talk to them, see what's up.' It was four of them, and me made five. Nobody didn't bring no guns or nothing. We wasn't looking for trouble."

Geographically, the southwest Bronx could be one of the prettier neighborhoods in New York. West of Jerome Avenue, the narrow streets run like a rollercoaster over a series of small hills that bunch tightly on top of one another, rising to a sheer bluff

Continued on page 88

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Hard science and soft sell dominated the Fourth International AIDS Conference in Stockholm. While the media followed Dr. Robert Gallo in packs, asking the usual questions, the answer may lie in one of the thousands of theories that were largely overlooked.



A . I . D . S .

S

aturday, June 11, 1988. Stockholm, Sweden

Two subway stops from central Stockholm, amid patches of lush forest and grassy hills, stands a monstrous, bright orange structure of cement and glass. Inside, the atmosphere is sterile and futuristic, with uniformed guards carrying metal detectors, computers hanging from the ceilings flashing messages, and carpeted glass tunnels connecting the vast halls. A large black screen in the main entrance says, "Welcome to the Fourth International Conference on AIDS. Stockholm International Fairs, June 12-16, 1988. The time is 1:03 p.m."

The weather in Stockholm is perfect. Conference delegates mill around the Old City in Stockholm, awed by its flawless charm, shopping for Kosta Boda crystal, Marabou chocolate, and clogs, in the hours between registration and the opening ceremony.

The tidy blond woman behind the counter smiles, hands me my badge and the two catalogues of abstracts, each as thick as the Manhattan Yellow Pages and twice as heavy. "Relax, dear delegate," one of them begins. "You have 2,000 valuable minutes in which to meet more than 6,000 other delegates and to digest more than 3,000 scientific communications. Relax in the awareness that it is not only impossible, but hardly worthwhile, to try to comprehend the entire conference."

In one of the two main poster halls, a few dozen people have already started setting up booths and tacking up posters. The first familiar face I see is Bob Kunst from Cure AIDS Now (CAN), whose booth is already set up with flyers, buttons, and petitions. The last time I saw him was at last year's AIDS conference in Washington, D.C. "How are you?" I ask. "Fed up," he says. "My best friend died last week. Since the last time I saw you, I've been to over 40 funerals."

Sunday, June 12.

Dr. Robert Gallo's voice booms out over the public address system. "The period of 1982-1984 saw dramatic advances in research. We were able to prove that HIV was the cause of the disease; the virus was reproduced in mass, continuous tissue culture; and blood tests were developed that saved thousands of lives by preventing the spread of the virus. The antiviral program that followed, based on findings about HIV, led to the development of AZT. It has been said that this is the most incredible advance in a new disease in the history of biomedical science."

The introductory ceremony has been going on for two hours now and the man seated to my left is fast asleep, lulled by the droning, hollow rhetoric of the speakers, all of them extolling the incredible feats of science. Beginning with the prime minister of Sweden and ending with Bob Gallo, each speaker repeats the claims as if they were political slogans.

"Never before in the history of disease has science advanced so rapidly. In only four years, since we discovered the virus, we have been able to..." "We know more about HIV than any other virus in the history of science..." And so on.

Both Gallo and Luc Montagnier, the two discoverers of HIV who recently settled a three-year strife over who actually discovered HIV first, centered their speeches on defending the theory that HIV is the cause of AIDS, which has been strongly challenged in the past year. Montagnier said that the evidence is overwhelming that HIV-1 and -2 are the agents, because HIV-2 has now caused AIDS in macaque monkeys. He talked about Simian Immunodeficiency Viruses (SIV) causing SAIDS in rhesus monkeys, Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) causing Feline AIDS (FAIDS), African Green Monkeys, Lentiviruses, and mutations of HIV. The most alarming point he made was that people who are testing negative for HIV may have "hidden" infections, which would help explain why so many people with AIDS test negative for HIV antibodies.

Gallo offered a long list of reasons to believe that HIV is the cause of AIDS, yet concluded, oddly enough, by introducing a new herpes virus, HBLV or HHV-6, which he said is "definitely a cofactor in the development of AIDS."

Back in the press room, typewriters are clicking frantically. Two Canadian reporters are trying to straighten it all out.

"Did you understand any of that?" one of them wonders.

"Well, yeah. HIV is the primary cause of AIDS, but there are several other viruses that act as cofactors—like HHV-6 or whatever, and HIV-2."

"But why is HIV-2 the one that makes the monkeys sick?"

I spot Randy Shilts, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter who was catapulted to fame with his book *And the Band Played On*, a piercing exposé of the corrupt and bungling politics of AIDS in the United States. I introduce myself.

"Oh yeah, SPIN," he grins, "my favorite Gallo interview. I happen to think that HIV does cause AIDS, but I dislike the man all the same."

Shilts tells me that a group of people are going around the conference, targeting gay people in particular and trying to convince them that Gallo's not such a bad guy after all.

"They said to me," recalls Shilts, rolling his eyes in disgust, "'Do you know that Dr. Gallo was going to leave science because of your book? Why can't you write about all the good things he's doing?' I'd be very surprised if Dr. Gallo left science," I told them. "How else is he going to get 7,000 people in a room to get up and cheer for him?" ... Jesus"

Monday, June 13

In one of the two main poster halls, all the scientific abstracts are tacked up on big white boards. After a half hour of walking around trying desperately to take in and understand their meaning, I feel dizzy and confused, blinded by science. "3' AZIDOTHYIMADINE (AZT) PREVENTS THE DISSEMINATION OF RETROVIRUS IN LP-BM5 MuLV INFECTED C57BL/6 MICE. I may as well be trying to understand Chinese. Two major facts do emerge, though, almost immediately: 1) That an overwhelming majority of the antiviral therapy abstracts are on AZT, the only drug that has received FDA approval as an AIDS therapy. 2) That most of the abstracts on AZT conclude, in one way or another, that AZT, although it is toxic, is effective against AIDS."

The most disturbing thing I hear about AZT at the entire conference comes from Sam Broder, the man behind AZT from the National Cancer Institute, who says that we should start giving AZT to HIV-positive asymptomatic women, so that their unborn children can absorb it through the placenta and better their chances of never developing AIDS.

The most important abstract of the convention may be #2662. An army researcher, Dr. Shyh-Ching Lo, from the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, has isolated an agent from an AIDS patient that causes AIDS symptoms and death in animals. And it isn't HIV.

The authors of the abstracts are at their posters between 11 and 12 every day. Dr. Lo is alone in front of his poster. When he spots the PRESS on my badge, he is cautious, saying "I don't want to get involved in all the political conflicts, I've been burned a few times and I want to make sure the science isn't sacrificed."

Assuring him that I just want to know about his abstracts, I ask if he has really isolated a virus from an AIDS patient that is totally different from HIV.

"Yes," he says, "we're not even so sure it's a virus. Let's just call it an agent. We know it's contagious and we know it's DNA contained, which is a difference from the retrovirus HIV. This agent does not contain any reverse transcriptase activity, which is the hallmark for a retrovirus, so we know we're not dealing with a retrovirus. If it is a virus at all, it is a DNA virus. We injected this agent in four monkeys and in 7-9 months they all died."

"And what kind of symptoms did they have?"

"Mainly weight loss, not associated with significant diarrhea. In the terminal stage, they have very low white blood cell counts, and they also had very persistent fever in the earlier course of the disease."

"Do you believe that this agent has anything to do with the etiology of AIDS or development of AIDS in a person, or is this just another opportunistic agent?"

"Obviously, any AIDS patient is immunocompromised and has a much higher chance of getting opportunistic infections. Right now we don't know if this is an opportunistic infection or if it has a significant role in the etiology of AIDS."

Photograph by John Dugdale

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"Do you think it has any relationship to Dr. Gallo's HBLV or HHV-6?"

"No. Genetic analysis has been done to compare it with HBLV, and we're quite confident that it's not the same virus."

A man who has been standing nearby, listening attentively to our conversation, introduces himself. He is a former employee of the New York City Department of Health, who resigned because of their AIDS program. He's very interested in Lo's virus. I ask him why

"Well," he says, "when someone says they've found a new infectious particle in an AIDS patient, one immediately wonders if it has anything to do with the development of AIDS. Maybe HIV and this virus work together. Since it's a DNA virus, it may be easier to treat it. We are able to treat herpes, for example. If this is true, it's extremely significant because it means we might have another route to a therapy for AIDS. It is a very, very fascinating finding. I think it's the most important abstract at the whole conference."

"What do you think," I ask him, "about Gallo's HBLV?"

"I haven't had time to assess it, really. I think Dr. Gallo wants us to believe in a certain religion, and that religion is H-I-V. He wants that to be the cause of AIDS and he wants to get a Nobel prize. Even if he finds another virus, he doesn't want to change the thinking right now."

Bob Gallo is standing in the middle of the main hall, deep in conversation. His manner is rushed, intense, with sudden gestures and a blunt delivery. Wanting to speak to him about Lo's virus and HBLV, I hover in his general area for about 30 minutes, hoping he'll finish his conversation. While I am standing there, a man walks up to me, hands me his camera, and asks if I would take a picture of him and Dr. Gallo.

"In Egypt, we like Dr. Gallo very much," he says. "More than we like Dr. Montagnier." I imagine Egyptian TV reporters stopping people at the marketplace in Cairo and asking them who their favorite AIDS virus discoverer is: Gallo or Montagnier? He walks up to Gallo, shakes his hand, they both smile, and I take the picture.

Handing back the camera, I say, "Hello, Dr. Gallo. May I ask you a few questions?"

"I don't have time right now. I was on my way out," he snaps. "Flossy! Where's Flossy? Flossy, come on! We're late." Gallo strides over to Flossy Wong Staaf, his coworker and closest companion, followed by a team of TV reporters. "Here he is," Staaf announces proudly, "the famous Dr. Gallo." The reporters flock to him, literally jabbing each other to get closer. They start making their way toward the exit.

"Are we going to get a vaccine soon, Dr. Gallo?" asks one Swedish reporter.

"Well," says Gallo, "the basic science is progressing extremely rapidly and very well. But the hardest thing is still left - to get rid of the disease, right? I think it's do-able, and that's a sincere statement. I think it will be solved, not thanks to public education, but thanks to science. But I'm not going to tell you when."

He bolts through the revolving doors. Damn. I missed him. I go to the press room and put in a request to interview him, fully aware that it will never happen. I'm told that Dr. Gallo will be holding a closed, very exclusive press conference tomorrow, and that I'd be wasting my time even trying to get in.

"I promise not to ask him anything," I plead. The press officer laughs.

Tuesday, June 14.

On my way to the main poster hall, I see Dr. Anthony Fauci, the head of the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) walking towards the cafeteria. "Excuse me, Dr. Fauci," I say, "I'm confused by Dr. Gallo's speech. How important is HBLV in the development of AIDS? How can he say that it's 'definitely a cofactor in the development of AIDS,' yet all we test for and worry about is HIV?"

"This conference will not reveal any good news about vaccines or treatments. There are many hypotheses, but few solid advances."

"I think," says Fauci, "the point he was probably making is that it very well may serve as a cofactor, an inducing factor. He wasn't talking about anything primary. It's very clear that the primary etiologic agent is unquestionably HIV-1."

"But isn't the problem with HIV that it doesn't kill T-cells?"

"No . . . well, it does, actually. That's the point that again gets confused. If you look at HIV in the test tube, it kills T-cells very efficiently. The thing in the body is that it does it in a very gradual way. But you can definitely, unequivocally demonstrate that HIV does kill T-4 cells."

"So a cofactor isn't entirely necessary, then, but if there is a cofactor, HBLV is being considered?"

"Exactly," smiles Fauci.

Jim Fouratt, from the PWA health group in New York City, walks up from behind and grabs my arm. "Come on," he says, pulling me towards the plenary halls, "that guy who injected himself is speaking at two."

"Who?" I ask, jogging to keep up with him.

"Zagury or whatever his name is. He's trying to develop a vaccine and he's used himself as a model." We run into Randy Shilts, who is headed in the opposite direction. "Randy, come on," shouts Jim. "You've got to come hear Zagury." Shilts follows us. We find the workshop, titled "Vaccine Development and Planning for Trials," and are ushered in. The room is absolutely packed. It's hot and there is no oxygen. We prop up against the wall and strain to hear the French scientist's words.

Daniel Zagury may be the only scientist at the conference who, in the course of research, has put his life on the line. Zagury injected himself with HIV antibody particles in order to develop HIV antibodies, which he hopes may evolve into a vaccine. After his presentation he was mobbed by reporters. When asked how his health was, he replied, "I've never felt better."

The bottom line about a vaccine against AIDS was delivered by Nobel prize winner David Baltimore, who said, "This conference will not reveal any good news about vaccines or treatments. There are many hypotheses, but few solid advances."

Some experts at the conference went so far as to say that the very idea of developing a vaccine is fruitless—impossible. Every attempt to vaccinate monkeys and apes against HIV has failed. If it were a simple matter of creating antibodies, we would have had a vaccine long ago, because the body does this naturally. In fact, when we refer to some-

body "having the AIDS virus," we actually mean that they have antibodies to it. If natural antibodies do not provide immunity, why should vaccine-induced antibodies miraculously do so?

Wednesday, June 15.

The very first thing you see when you enter the main exhibition hall is a huge white banner with blue letters that says "WELLCOME." Burroughs-Wellcome, the company that owns AZT, has an enclosed area as big as two large living rooms, with wall-to-wall carpeting and plush sofas in matching ash grey. Sixteen large video screens cover one wall. The images on the screens, synchronized to a cheap, instrumental disco song, alternate between scientists holding up test tubes in laboratories, pills being funneled into bottles zipping by on a conveyor belt, and masses of people, in slow motion, crossing a street ("The virus is spreading throughout the population," etc.). Huge glass windows, posters, and banners bear the Wellcome emblem, an illuminated blue unicorn, standing on the hollow slogan: "Wellcome . . . Meeting the Viral Challenge."

Every other time the video runs, the music stops and a British accent narrates, "In 1984, three years after the first cases of AIDS were reported, a retrovirus was identified as the causative agent. . . . Since the 1950s, the Wellcome Foundation has been doing extensive antiviral research, and so it was natural for Wellcome to be at the forefront of the effort to find an effective therapy for AIDS. In November 1984, just months after HIV had been identified, scientists at the U.S. research laboratories of the Wellcome Foundation Limited, screened a Thymidine analogue. This agent showed activity against the HIV virus. . . . Today AZT is our only hope against the dreaded disease. Thousands of patients around the world are . . ."

"You've got to be kidding," I say under my breath.

"Pardon?" A young man in a grey suit and a Burroughs-Wellcome badge looks at me indignantly.

"Your video doesn't mention certain details about AZT," I say flatly, "like that it costs \$10,000 per year to take, or that it was a cancer drug 17 years ago but was considered too toxic for people to be subjected to. Or that fifty percent of all AIDS patients can't even take it because . . ."

"I don't think I'm the person to speak to about that. If you'd like, I'll take your name and . . ."

"Never mind." I keep on walking through the huge poster hall, half expecting to hear Orwell's haunting chant: WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH.

I am standing on line at one of the cafeterias, where shrimp sandwiches are almost ten dollars each, and I overhear two men in front of me discussing the latest rumor: that AZT stocks have dropped by 20 points since Gallo's speech about HBLV, because it is feared that HIV may not be the cause of AIDS after all. I go back to the Wellcome camp and ask the man in the grey suit if the rumor is true. He says he knows nothing about it.

The only expression of Swedish gays fighting AIDS came from a booth bannered "RFSL" (Riksförbundet for Sexual Liberation). Two bearded gay men are sitting behind the booth, both of them with ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) stickers with the motto "Silence = Death" on their badges. There are two bowls on the counter, one with potato chips, one with condoms. Next to the condoms is a stack of invitations to tomorrow night's "Jack-Off Party" in the Old Town. The cover of the invita-

tion has a vague drawing of four naked men standing in a circle holding their hands on each other's buttocks. I open it and read:

Rules:

* Street Clothes, including pants or shorts, **MUST** be removed upon entering. Nudity, save footwear, is encouraged.

* Activity is **STRICTLY J/O**: Solo, by the score, in a huddle, across the room, stroke, rub, pull, exhibit, touch, hold.

* There will be **NO** ass play **OR** activities that result in any exchange of body fluid (semen, urine, saliva)

Relax and Enjoy

We are friendly as well as horny

Doors open 8-9

Snacks and Non-Alcoholic Beverages

The two guys in the booth look bored. Sweden has 192 AIDS cases, of whom 89 have died. So far, out of a population of 8.4 million, 1,816 people are reported HIV-positive. Of every country in the world, Sweden is the country that has carried out the greatest number of HIV tests per inhabitant. But the most startling news about AIDS in Sweden is this: Sweden is the only country that has a law allowing compulsory isolation for HIV-infected people. The government has selected an island in Stockholm's archipelago as the quarantine sight for any HIV-positive person who does not abide by his or her doctor's sexual-behavior regulations.

I ask the two guys in the RFSL booth about this. They tell me that four people have been sentenced to isolation on the island so far. "It's crazy," says one of them. "Doctors can say anything they want, and who can prove that it's true?"

"HIV-positive people can be locked up in total isolation on the basis of pure hearsay, of arbitrary speculation about an individual being a contamination threat to his or her fellow human beings. No proof whatsoever is required," says Hasse Ytterberg, President of the National Swedish Federation for Gay and Lesbian Rights, in a speech at the Candlelight March held during the conference. "The Swedish AIDS legislation is probably one of the most repressive in the world."

**"My best friend died last week.
Since the last time I saw you,
I've been to over 40 funerals."**

The Swedish press's approach to AIDS is terror-oriented, making no distinction between an HIV antibody-positive status and AIDS. *Aftonbladet*, the leading evening newspaper, ran a cover story on the first day of the conference about the plight of HIV-positive children in Sweden, and the only themes presented were death, despair, shock, terminal illness, and isolation. This bothered me. Living in New York City, I've grown accustomed to seeing people with AIDS fight like hell to stay alive. They take AL-721 and other alternative therapies, they eat macrobiotic food, they meditate, they eat herbs, they pray. They are self-empowered; and many of them survive. Four, five, six years, maybe longer.

"Are you guys connected to the gay communities in New York and LA?" I ask the men in the RFSL booth. "Do people with AIDS in Sweden know that there are new, effective therapies that offer a better chance of survival than AZT? Do they know that there are long-term survivors of AIDS, or that being HIV positive is not the same as being dead?"

The two men give me blank stares. "Yes. We know about all that," one of them says meekly.

"Then why aren't you talking about it? I mean, you are the only ones who can reach people . . . people with AIDS. You have to encourage them to fight. Try to get articles published in the papers or something."

"Yes, I hear what you're saying," one of them says coldly, "but it's not as easy as you think. This is not the United States, this is Sweden. And most people are so terrified of letting it be known that they have HIV or AIDS that they'd rather keep a low profile. They'd rather be quiet."

"Show them your stickers," I say, "Silence = Death. There's nothing to be afraid of if you're dead, is there?"

They start to look irritated now. In the neighboring booth, a video about a girl who finds out she's HIV positive is playing. She's sitting in her doctor's office. She gets the test result and starts crying and screaming frantically. "Why me!? Why the fuck should I get this? I've been clean for two years now!" Her doctor just sits there and finally he says, in a very placid, parental tone, "Eva . . . I'm very sorry. I really am, but the most important thing right now is that you tell me who you've been with so we can warn them."

"Like that!" I say. "What good does a video

Continued on page 87

MEAT BOB

FRESH!

IN STORE JULY 12!

Bob 'Bobcat' Goldthwait
Live in Concert

SPECIAL TODAY!

Chrysalis

reveled in it, quickly rising to through the hierarchy to "Master" status. The game did seem to help him retreat into a world of his own making.

Tommy began taking lonely excursions through the tangled, hilly expanse surrounding the nearby Oak Ridge Reservoir. Free from his problems at home, he frequently sneaked from his house past midnight to wander the brush alone. "It was a little weird," says one neighborhood boy. "Most of us used the woods as a sort of lover's lane, but not Tommy. We'd see him in there at all hours of the night, walking around or looking at the water. It was strange."

Seeming to find solace in his growing isolation, Tommy became more distant from his family. But as the school year began, that distance wasn't enough and he began to drink, a little at first and then more and more heavily. The many disagreements with his mother turned to full-blown arguments. She insisted that he attend church and continue at parochial school, where he was unhappy.

There would be no debate over where Tommy would go to high school in the fall of the following year. He was going just up the hill from Reverend George Brown to Pope John High School. Her insistence that he get a sound Catholic education meant he would have to continue the commute to the nearby town of Sparta. Tommy didn't measure the distance so much in miles, but in social life. Most of the kids in the neighborhood and on the teams went to local public schools. As far as he was concerned, his mother's decision sentenced him to four more years of being an outsider both in his neighborhood and in his school. As the start of the new year approached, however, Tommy's angry arguments with his mother quieted, and Tom, Sr., noticed that his son seemed resigned to his fate.

Shortly after the Christmas holidays, Tommy's classmates noticed the extreme shift in his behavior. Little things at first, then finally his hallway declaration that Satan had visited him in a dream. The next day, while listening to a teacher's lesson in class, Tommy passed a backwards-written note to a friend. "Evil of all mankind dwells within my soul," he scrawled in bright red magic marker with a nervous hand. "If you want in, let me know."

When Sister Philomena saw the note that the teacher had confiscated, and heard about Tommy's ongoing obsession with the devil, she reflected on the rash of satanic incidents in the region and immediately summoned his mother.

"You should be concerned," the principal told Bettyanne Sullivan. "Some strange things can happen." By their meeting's end, the Sister felt encouraged by her pupil's promise to change, and his mother's determination to guide him. But she would have to wait until Monday to mark Tommy's improvement. Friday, school was cancelled because of the heavy snow.

At 9:30 Sunday morning, a neighbor found Tommy Sullivan in the thick woods behind Fred Eastman's house. He was buried in a snowdrift, his wrists cut and throat slashed ear to ear. So much blood had seeped out of him that the walls of his foot-deep grave had turned violet. Beside him lay the open Boy Scout knife that he had used to slaughter his mother and then turned on himself. The ferocity of the wounds he had inflicted not only on his mother, but on himself, certainly seemed to indicate that some wild force was behind it. Still, Paul Hart thought that Satan might be just too handy of a solution. So far they had turned up a lot of evidence, but no answers.

If headlines across the country tell the story, an old scourge is now the newest scapegoat. Whether it's Son of Sam or a recent rash of high school suicides, Satan is to blame. Cult murders, child porn rings, ritualistic sacrifices, human mutilations—much of this is routinely attributed to satanic worshipers. Real or not, police nationwide realize that youngsters latch on to these beliefs not just in a rebellious spirit, but for the excuse to dabble in other taboos—drugs, sex, crime, any temptation at all.



"Exactly 20 years from this day I promise to commit suicide. I will tempt all teenagers on earth to have sex, have incest, do drugs, and worship you. I believe that evil will once again rise and conquer the love of God."

Police in many areas have gone so far as to organize Satan Squads. Now, anytime a homicide is especially savage or a teen suicide is seemingly inexplicable, the police stake out the Prince of Darkness.

In the days following Tommy and Bettyanne Sullivan's death, Larry Zilliox sat 35 miles away in his Gramercy Park office surrounded by books on satanism and traded questions with the Jefferson Township detectives. A self-proclaimed devil-hunter, Zilliox has made a career investigating the increasing number of Satan-related tragedies. He puts the blame squarely on the music industry, violent lyrics, and lurid album covers. "The occult has always been around, but now these kids are eating this stuff up," he says.

Zilliox and other Satan-hunters like Tom Wedge in Ohio blame much of the current activity on heavy metal music. Death metallists like Slayer, Coven, and Twisted Sister are accused of desensitizing teenagers to violence. They point to the satanic lightning bolts that Kiss incorporates in its logo and Ozzy Osbourne's claim that he eats bats for breakfast (as well as his song "Suicide Solu-

tion") as responsible for cannibalistic mutilations, serial killings, and violent sex abuse.

Paul Hart sees it differently. "What kind of home life does a kid have if he turns to something like satanism?" he asks. "Tommy could have been sacrificing elephants in his room and the parents wouldn't have known about it." Dismissing the prevalent view of Satan poisoning young minds, Hart says, "If a family is plagued by tension, or a kid is made to feel inadequate, the family is vulnerable to false idols."

The forum on satanism was considered a feature of Neighborhood Crime Watch when it was first planned by the concerned parents and clergy. A small turnout was expected. But what happened at Our Lady of the Mountain Church on Thursday night, and at the extra meeting held that afternoon at Jefferson High School, was closer to an old-fashioned town meeting. The people of Jefferson Township, whipped into a frenzy by the newspaper headlines and born-again slogans, wanted to be assured that the case of young Tommy Sullivan was an isolated one. Police turned away carloads of teenagers, parents, even nuns, from this standing-room-only forum/rally on Devil Worship. They all came to take on Satan. Most came to blame him for their tragedy.

But that's not how everyone saw it. After the meetings, some of Tommy's friends, like Chris Lena, who knew him from baseball leagues and Cub Scouts, pointed to different causes. Saying that satanism and heavy metal were reactions, not causes, Chris told reporters, "When something goes wrong, if you don't talk to someone, you have to do something else."

"Parents should listen to their kids," 16-year-old Lisa Thomas told a local paper. "I don't think Tommy would have done what he did if he didn't want to be helped."

This summer, the Sullivan house sits empty on an otherwise vibrant block. Tom and Brian have long since abandoned the town, trying to start up again, away from all the questions that just won't go away. Their nameplate has been taken off the mailbox of the house that, despite its fresh coat of paint in a different color, has had no takers since its been on the market. And sometimes, as the months pass, even those close to the Sullivans simply put the events of this past winter out of their minds. Even Paul Hart. But then there comes a reminder, either a small incident in the area, or something big far off that you only hear about on the news or read in the paper.

Several months after the incident in Jefferson Township, Paul Hart heard about another, similar-sounding act of violence some thousand miles away in Rochester, Minnesota. Another teenager. A disenchanted Catholic whose favorite group was Suicidal Tendencies. A good student, who is described as "a poet kind of person with deep feelings," and who at the age of sixteen is accused of killing first his parents, and then two children, with a 28-inch ax. Again, the community turned to Satan for answers, and again the experts were called in to support that claim. So there will be a debate as to what, not who, was to blame.

Inside her office at the Reverend George Brown school, Sister Philomena Fleck agrees that there's more to these problems than Satan. She confides that every day she worries about the souls of her young charges, but you can't look for single scapegoats. Still, she stands behind the statement she made to the police about the young boy that slipped away. "The devil," she told them, "was walking in our hallways."

Burger King using the image to sell their choke 'n' puke on network TV. I wish somebody would write a book on that.

HELL ON WHEELS BY ADAM LASSITER

This is one sniveling piece of shit that isn't even worth checking out as a biker exploitation. So stay away from it; don't support it in any way, shape, or form. Our copy was sent to us by Daryl Lawrence of Barstow, CA, who rated it "a real puker." We can't improve on Daryl's review.

DEMON BOX BY KEN KESEY

Don't know if you'd be into spending \$7.95 for an oversize paperback of reprinted essays and articles by the hero of the Acid Tests but at least one chapter is worth it to me. There's a great passage in "Now We Know How Many Holes It Takes to Fill the Albert Hall" wherein an Angel named Old Bert strains the ever-stretched Anglo-American relations. The story so far: Old Bert, his ol' lady and a couple of hogs have accompanied Kesey and about a dozen Pranksters to Merry Olde England and wind up at Apple Records for an impending party with John Lennon. Bert is hungry.

Well, you can probably guess what follows. The tie-dyed, muttonchopped macaroon eater is sent flying across the room after an ill-chosen remark, and the near rumble between the Yanks and Brits (Kesey, the former wrestler, puts his watch in his pocket) is quelled by the sudden appearance of John and Yoko in Santa suits. Too bad.

THE BIKERIDERS BY DANNY LYON

In some ways, this book is even better than Hunter Thompson's *Hell's Angels* which is saying quite a lot. It was written by Danny Lyon, a member of the Chicago Outlaws during the same period that Thompson was gathering material for his book. *The Bikeriders* is a skinny book, only 93 pages, but it is nevertheless crammed with verbatim interviews of various Outlaws, and a selection of black and white photographs representing an Outlaws' eye view of their world from the early to mid-Sixties. To put it mildly, the book is fuckin' fascinating, and probably the best way to get this across would be to run an excerpt. Funny Sonny tells about showin' class at the first Outlaw picnic he attended. "Now if you ever tried to swallow a caterpillar, there's a thing to swallowing a caterpillar. Face him out on your tongue. And then try to swallow him. He gets down here, he starts crawling back up. 'Cause by now he's hangin' on, he knows he's on his way down. He's gonna hang on for dear life. So I got my mouth closed and, you know, it's closed and everybody's eating. And I'm at the table and everybody's eating, and I open my mouth just a little bit and this little fuckin' caterpillar comes crawling out of my mouth. About four people got sick, see. So I crunched my teeth down on him and I chewed him up real good and I swallowed. So I had a lot of food to eat that day. Because everybody got up and quit eatin' their food. That's when I really met the Outlaws, really met 'em good." Cockroach, an ex-Chicago Outlaw turned cop, had similar culinary preferences: "Bugs aren't really bad to eat. It's all in the person's mind." As you can see, this is a fuckin' great book. It's what the anthropologist eggheads would refer to as an oral history, and you can't get anymore authentic than that.

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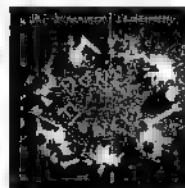
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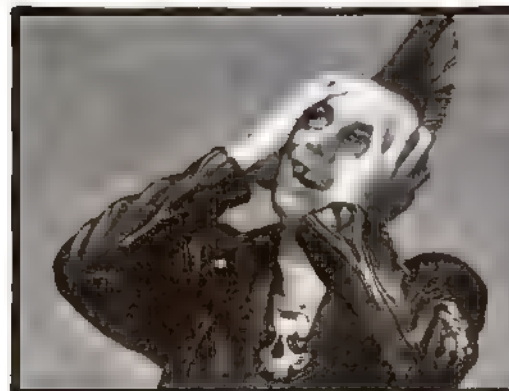
Me ole mate Slasher had this
rock 'n roll band, see What a sound!
Melt your ole lady's hair curlers, it would



Then Slasher ups and emigrates to Australia
doesn't he? But he leaves me
every recording the band ever made



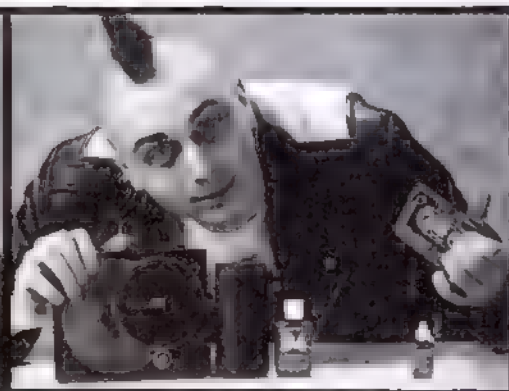
Whenever I missed the ole' sod,
I played his music But the more I played 'im
the dufter he sounded



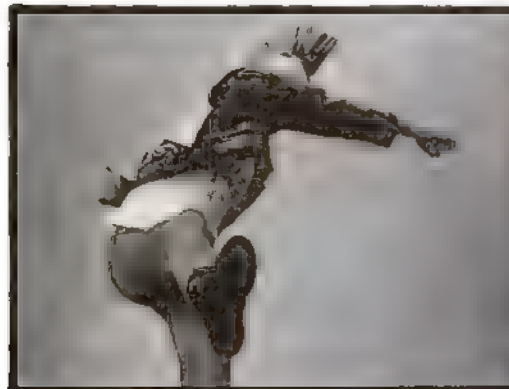
Soon his music sounded so awful,
I was glad he'd hopped it.



Then the missus buys all this
Discwasher stuff, doesn't she?



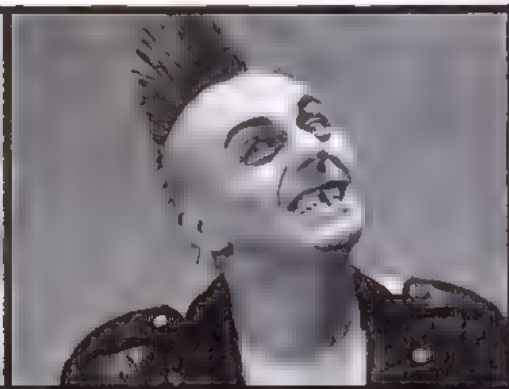
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The bass gives me ma-in-law migraine
The lead guitar makes me fillings drop out

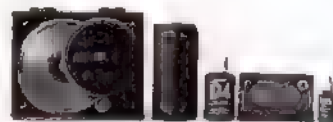


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SPINS



Robert R. Bruner

The Ramones
Chiefs of Relief
Sister Rosetta Tharpe
Cher
Ohio Players
Grandmaster Flash
Camper Van Beethoven
Womack & Womack
Iggy Pop
Steve Coleman



George DuBois/London Features

Ramones *Ramones Mania* Sire

It had been a hell of a month. A real screaming Love Is a Dog from Hell month. Just imagine being in love and having your worst nightmares come true. Got it? I wasn't looking for anything but what I needed was a little joy. A little fun. But this is the Eighties and fun don't grow on trees. That's when Arturo Vega, the Ramones' lighting designer, called and told me we were going to the Bronx Zoo. I didn't want to go to no zoo. But when I walked out the door, there was Arturo sitting behind the wheel of a fart-brown convertible, shades engaged,

with his boom box blaring out *Ramones Mania*, the new thirty-song double LP by the premier punk band that changed the world. The ones who made rock 'n' roll fun again. It was just what I needed. And if you've survived the Eighties, it's just what you need, too. Pure fucking joy. A celebration.

Ramones Mania is all your favorite Ramones tracks from over the years, one huge party in one double album. I mean what could be more way cool, man? It's not so much a piece of nostalgia as an affirmation that life doesn't have to suck. Just looking at the song titles is enough to cause the most cynical of you out there to break into smiles. Side One starts off with "I Wanna Be Sedated," then "Teenage

Lobotomy," "Rock 'n' Roll Radio," "Shock Treatment," "Beat on the Brat," "Sheena Is a Punk Rocker," "I Wanna Live," "Pinhead." How can you go wrong with this record? Even if you already have all the Ramones albums, you gotta get this one. Why give the Ramones more money for songs you already heard? Well, it's a tough job, but somebody really needs to do it. And as time goes on, it becomes more apparent how many un-fun rock 'n' roll bands there are. And just how much of a National Treasure the Ramones are. Who cares that Johnny can't play the guitar, that Joey calls me a "fuckin' traitor" every time he sees me (for being friendly with ex-drummer Richie Reinhardt), that Dee Dee

Top: Joey and Debbie and a dog from hell. Above (L R) Dee Dee, Joey, Richie, Johnny

Chiefs of Relief (L-R) Duncan Grieg, Paul Cook, Matthew Ashman, Lance Burman

embraces every bastardized form of mutant music that comes down the pike, and that Marky is now the most "normal" Ramone of all? It's a miracle that these guys could stay together for 15 years and produce this body of work. But in reality, what else were they going to do?

Side Two: "Blitzkreig Bop," "Cretin Hop," "Rockaway Beach," "Com-mando," "I Wanna Be Your Boy-friend," "Mama's Boy," "Bop 'Til You Drop," "Happy Family."

The only complaint I got with this compilation is that there are not more Phil Spector cuts, especially "Baby I Love You," that killer Ronnie Spector heartbreaker where Joey's voice transcends time and space and proves what a set of lungs he's got.

Side Three: "Bonzo Goes to Bit-burg," "Outsider," "Psycho Ther-apy," "Wart Hog," "Animal Boy," "Needles & Pins," "Howling at the Moon."

Side Four: "Something in My Drink," "We Want the Airwaves," "Chinese Rock," "Something to Do," "The KKK Took My Baby Away," "Indian Giver," "Rock 'n' Roll High School."

Getting in that convertible with Arturo and Ramones Mania and flooring it out of the city, I felt like I was coming home. "Lobotomy! Lobotomy! Lobotomy!"

Yea! the Ramones are living proof that there's still something to celebrate about this thing called life. "Peace and Love is here to stay. Now I can wake up and face the day. Happy, happy, happy all the time. Shock treat-ment I'm doing fine." Hey, thanks Joey, Johnny, Dee Dee, Tommy, Marky, and Richie for getting us through the weirdness. And making it fun

—Legs McNeil

The Chiefs of Relief *The Chiefs of Relief* Sire

The Chiefs of Relief are the band that answers the musical question, what if the Archies tossed Betty and Veronica out of the band, moved to England, and went headbanging with the Beastie Boys? Chewing Bazooka gum flecked with metal may not be everybody's idea of a good time, but tell that to ex-Sex Pistols drummer Paul Cook and ex-Bow Wow Wow guitarist Matthew Ashman, whose "it's alive" baby this is, or producer Richard Gottelher, whose heavy bubble wads have been stuck to the bottom of the rock 'n' roll school desk for close to a quarter cen-

tury now. The formula for this particu-lar brand of kid's stuff really hasn't changed much since the days of Got-tehrer's mid-Sixties studio band, the "I Want Candy" Strangeloves, or leader of the-gang Gary Glitter, or even so-where-is-he-now-that-Liberace's dead Adam Ant: If you can lay down a hard rock foundation of noisy primal rhythms and top it with cavity-caus-ing, (preferably) empty-headed stomp-along lyrics and melodies, it's a fair bet that in no time, legions of snack-starved Hansels and Gretels will quickly gather at your door. The real beauty of music like this is that for some unexplainable reason, the dumber it is, the better it gets. And it's my gooey pleasure to report that the Chiefs of Relief album is real dumb and real good.

The Chiefs of Relief don't have any-thing quite as basic as Glitter's "Rock 'n' Roll," but they do have "Freedom

of Rock," which states the case nicely: "You got the freedom to rock! You got no reason to not... Don't knock the rock you got." And who will bring you this freedom of rock? Why, the Chiefs, of course! "We're kicking out some noise on a punk rock mission," they sing on "Kicking Out Noise," just to let you know they're on your side. And how much do they like you? "We been to China, we been to Rome! We wanna take the whole world home," they chant (gotta have those chants!) on the song named after the band (gotta have a song named after the band!). Underneath all this silliness, meanwhile, is an all-out musical at-tack highlighted by ear-splitting snare drums, brain-bursting bass lines, gut-busting guitar solos, and even the ever-popular cheesy organ (hey, roots!). Riffs, rap, rock, funk, punk—you name it: Like the guy in the spa-ghetti sauce commercial says, "It's in

there." Forewarned is forearmed, and people

—Billy Altman

Sister Rosetta Tharpe *Sister Rosetta Tharpe* Rosetta

Sister Rosetta Tharpe was a big wom-an, with a big voice, who sang what she wanted, when she wanted. She sang gospel songs with a dance band, blues songs with a gospel quintet. She was blasting out rock rhythms on elec-tric guitar while Chuck Berry was still in grade school. Starting out as a gos-pel singer in the Thirties, Rosetta soon made the switch to R&B and jazz. But unlike most performers who leave the gospel fold for secular acceptance, Sister Rosetta refused to allow the re-



Kate Gardner/Moscow Bros.

jection of her former fans to stop her from singing the music she loved. She sang blues, gospel, and jazz side by side, all in a rich and powerful voice filled with gospel fervor and human spirit.

Sister Rosetta has been ignored in recent times, but Rosetta Records rights this wrong with a lovingly compiled sixteen-track tribute that spans 28 years in her career. The album, which comes complete with in-depth liner notes and beautiful photos, features Rosetta in a wide variety of musical settings. We first hear her on several air checks recorded with Lucky Millender's band in the early Forties. Millender's was a dance band, and the tracks included here never stop rocking, from the gospel swing of "Down by the Riverside" to secular stompers like "Shout, Sister, Shout." Rosetta returned to the gospel format in the late Forties and throughout the Fifties.

During the Sixties, Rosetta got swept up in the blues renaissance. She traveled to Europe several times on packaged blues and gospel tours with

struck was nice, but hardly a range-breaker—propped up with a massive amount of hype. An epidemic of magazine covers fixed Cher's image as a survivor. Survivor of what? is the question. Being denied an Oscar nomination for *Mask*? Being gossiped about for wearing outré costumes and dating a younger man? Enduring plastic surgery?



Although the Reinvented Image would deny it, Cher has always happily ridden hype to whatever success was available. That's why interviews seldom mention that she and Sonny tried to break into music as the cutesie-pop duo of Caesar and Cleo, or discuss culture crimes like "Half Breed" or "Gypsies, Tramps, and Thieves," or acknowledge that her original success can be ascribed to two good songs ("I Got You Babe" and "The Beat Goes On"), a gimmicky wardrobe, and Sonny's experience as Phil Spector's promotions man. And while the Image reminds us that Cher and Sonny virtually divorced on the air, it ignores that the duo's whole act at the time was a hippified domestic comedy cliché—dopey husband, clever wife—set somewhere between Haight-Ashbury and Las Vegas.

The Reinvention comes full circle now, as Cher re-emerges as a pop diva with a new album called, improbably, *Cher*. It will make her a lot of money, if only because many impressionable fans will plunk down seven bucks for an artifact of the Image. All the songs conform to the new Cher, showing her to be a cynical, romantic, indomitable woman of the world. She makes full use of her two remaining vocal moves, a kind of low bleat that signifies angst, and a somewhat higher wail that she uses to chant choruses. None of the songs, neither the power ballads nor the Bon Jovi-style workouts, is memorable, even a re-cover of "Bang Bang" manages to eradicate all the kitschy charm of the original. This is one of those strange albums that will go platinum and will be available in remainder bins by next year, as soon as Cher's *Hot Quotient* drops a few degrees. Then, even at \$2.99, they won't be able to give it away.

—Jamie Malanowski

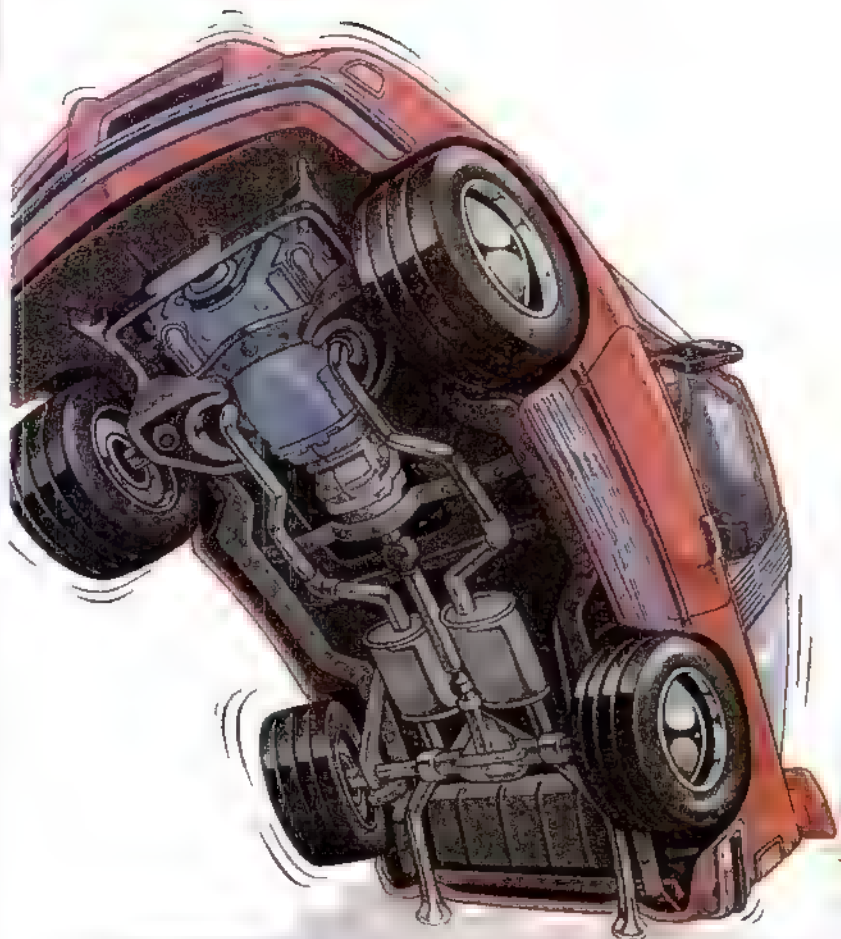


performers like Muddy Waters, and Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee. The European audiences grew to love her and she returned many times. The last recordings included here come from a 1969 solo performance at The Hot Club in Paris. There, a few years before her death, accompanied only by her own guitar, Sister Rosetta was still able to turn a club of subdued Frenchmen into shouting, foot-stomping lunatics.

—Jeff Rosen

Cher Cher Geffen

The reinvention of Cher reached its triumphant conclusion last April when she received the Best Actress Oscar and ascended from the level of mere Celebrity into Show Business Stardom. Like most of Cher's successes, this award was achieved with a dollop of talent—her performance in *Moon-*

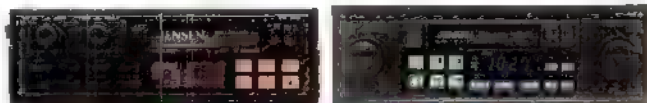


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(L-R) Grandmaster Flash, Mele-Mel, Rahiem, Kidd Creole, Scorpio. Not pictured: Cowboy



The Ohio Players Back Track Record

Back in '79 or '80, I was at a recording session and in walked the Ohio Players. I can't remember what they looked like...probably a cross between a football team and a law firm. I can't remember because they were joined by the most beautiful black women in the world, all stripped down to their skivvies, and carrying giant pots of honey that, at various points in the session, they poured over themselves. What a great session.

I figured the Ohio Players would be around forever, but damn if they didn't cut out for about eight years. I don't know what they did. Played football. Practiced law. Anyhow, here it is eight years later, and they're back from their sabbatical with a new record label, a new record, and a whole new pot of honey. They sound as good as ever, sweet and nasty funk played just right, and helped out by friends like Herbie Hancock. Only now the times have caught up with them.

Back when they split, we all thought Ohio was just left of nowhere. We

thought it was a place where people listened to Eric Carmen and ate peanut butter pie. The joke was on us. It's 1988, Eric Carmen has a big hit, turns out peanut butter pie's pretty swell, and now that we know that Bootsy Collins, Tracy Chapman, Chrissie Hynde, Anton Fier, and Pere Ubu all came from Ohio, the state seems like some kind of Mecca, like Paris in the Twenties.

The Ohio Players are back up there with everything that made Ohio great. They sound as good as they always did. Only better.

—Brian Cullman

Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five On the Strength Elektra

One of the best tracks on the reunion LP of Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five is "Yo Baby." Part of what makes "Yo Baby" so great is the live House Party groove it captures, coming close to the spirit of classic early Flash gems like "Birthday Party" and "Flash to the Beat." But what really does it for me is when the baddest rapper on the planet, Mele-Mel, growls the line "the Beastie Boys suck" over this track's devastating bass.

I mean, that just about sums it all up, doesn't it? It's been some six years since Grandmaster Flash and the Furi-

ous Five first recorded "The Message," rap's first acknowledged classic, and this following no less a record than "The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash on the Wheels of Steel," the first scratch record. In the interim, while Flash and the Furious Five hashed out the usual personal and legal differences, along came Public Enemy and KRS-One to claim the social awareness crown that was once indisputably theirs. And along came the second generation of metal rappers, Run-D.M.C. and frathouse thrashers the Beasties, to grab the commercial ring the original Furious Five paved the way for.

The reunion LP of Flash, Mele-Mel, and the Furious Five follows a string of disappointing Grandmaster Flash LPs for Elektra, and thus comes with high expectations, particularly following Mele-Mel's big win at the New Music Seminar rap-off last summer. So how do these guys respond? Well, for one thing, they unfortunately opt for the Run-D.M.C. formula and cover Steppenwolf's "Magic Carpet Ride."

But the bad news pretty much ends there. In addition to the aforementioned party monster "Yo Baby," the Furious Five mount what for the most part is one serious comeback. Things kick into the groove thang straight away with "Gold," as Mele-Mel lays down the shit about his fat gold chain over a bass line that updates the old Sugarhill house band sound for the Eighties. "Fly Girl" applies the silky

melodies of Ray, Goodman, and Brown to a soulfully smooth rap about a guy with "pantyline on his mind all the time." And with "This Is Where You Got It From" and "The Boy Is Dope," Flash shows all the would-be young turks just exactly what is dope on the two turntables. Just check out his use of everything from the Lone Ranger theme to Michael Jackson's "Bad."

While there are a few minor flaws here, the good news is that these guys are back, and by next time those should be ironed out. With Afrika Bambaataa's new one just out, an old school revival may be more likely than you think.

—Glen Boyd

Camper Van Beethoven Our Beloved Revolutionary Sweetheart Virgin

Camper Van Beethoven has powerful smarts, virtuosity without being tight-ass, a non-clichéd but catchy melodic sense, an occasional trombone that doesn't offend, a more-than-occasional fiddle that doesn't irritate—in fact, I outright like the trombone and fiddle, and I never like trombones or fiddles—dynamic arrangements, lyrics that manage to be both surreal and sensible, a true ensemble sound, and what else do you need? *Our Beloved*



Revolutionary Sweetheart is great, and that's all there is to it. The three cuts most likely to end up on my customized greatest hits tapes are "O Death," "Tania," and "Life Is Grand." "O Death" is credited to "trad." and is a dialogue between Death (who relishes his power) and some guy who doesn't want to die. It's funny but not quaint. I found myself thinking, "Why is this song eerie and joyous at the same time?" Because if you're pleading for your life, it means you think life is worth living. That's some trick. I

"Tania" is a love song to Patty Hearst. At first I thought it was ironic and then I realized that I too "long to see your face photographed at fifteen second intervals/In a bank in San Leandro/A Polaroid of you with a seven-headed dragon." That was when the news could really fuck with your head, and Camper Van Beethoven knows it: "How I long for the days/When you came to liberate us from boredom/From driving around/From the hours between five and seven in the evening/My beloved Tania, we carry your dance deep within our hearts/For no better reason than our lives have no meaning/And we want to be on television."

I quote at length because those are wonderful words. Watching the image of someone trying to break out and live her life is not the same as living your life, even if the image of Tania blew more minds than Owsley acid. Yet we can have affection for the memory of that image, especially in the absence of having done anything that weird ourselves. How much else can you really remember from the news?

"Life Is Grand" closes with the sentiment that life is indeed grand, presumably if you haven't wasted too much of it with empty images on the TV between five and seven. But here again CVB is not ironic. They know you're expecting "something darker" because they know that you know that

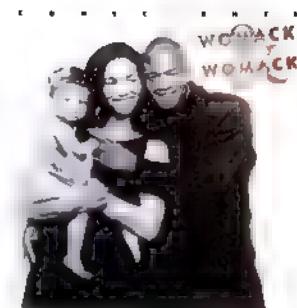
they're smart. But they're smarter than you think. They see all the absurdity and they still want to live. Kierkegaard thought that was heroic. So do I.

Charles M. Young

Womack & Womack Conscience Island

Lovers of rare grooves and the low-riding yawww of brickhouse basslines will get some kinda off on this record. Avoiding the cool/hot polarization that makes quiet-storm spineless (usually) and def-jams mindless (occasionally), Womack & Womack balance the sweet and the sophisticated over a bottom that's epiphanously funky. Melodic and rhythmic perfection join seamlessly in one melismatic vocal cadence—absolute totalization is all it is, and it's the particular genius of a husband and wife duo whose 1983 masterwork *Love Wars* compressed the entire spectrum and history of soul, gospel, disco, and the pop perfection of Dionne Warwick into one small space and then hurled it dancingly into the Eighties.

Their curriculum vitae gives the Womacks a reason to lay claim to that kind of breadth. They've got soul roots that run straight back to Sam Cooke (Linda's his daughter) and back past that to the church (Cecil and his broth-



ers sang gospel before, and as the Valentinos, they cut "It's All Over Now" in 1964 when the Rolling Stones were not much more than a glimmer in the Glimmer Twins' eyes). *Conscience* is intended as a return to the roots they chose not to emphasize on 1985's atmospheric *Radio M.U.S.C. Man*. They moved back home to West Virginia (where Cecil's father and his father before him mined coal and sang gospel), built a studio there, and collected stories from miners for these songs. And yeah, there's real deep stuff here: rivers, mountains, the smell of the sweat of work as it mingles with the sweat of love, the sound of laughter and of tears.

But before this starts sounding like a folklore project (or a perfect album for the sort of folks who think church choir authenticity makes Terence

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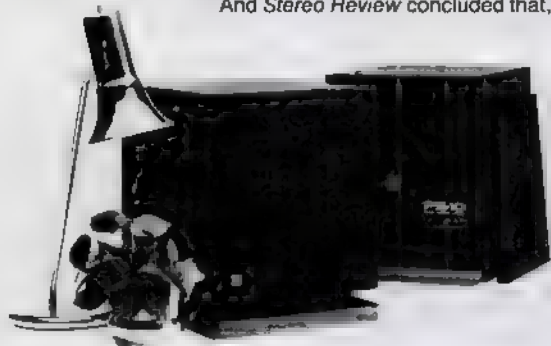
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Yawn D'Arby more fun than George Michael), let's offer thanks that there's something new going on, too. As Linda spells it out in "Celebrate the World," it's "a new music connection," a global groove. No exotic ethno-beats, but in "Conscious of My Conscience" and "Slave," the caress of an acoustic guitar floating across Fender Rhodes and percussion sets up an endlessly subtle complexity that's like Rufus, Blue Magic, the Isleys, and the Ohio Players gone juju. Elsewhere the Womacks's impassioned call and response sums up every triumph and trial men and women can offer one another. They give a sound to the search for spiritual and physical salvation. That they find it more than occasionally is hardly beside the point.

—J. Allen Levy

Iggy Pop *Instinct* A&M

In 1988, the rock T-shirt shopper has lots of options. You got your head-banger model, covered with long-haired skeletons carrying machine guns, blood spattering everywhere, and in big red letters "Metal Rules" (what are the metal rules, anyway?) And you got your punk rock shirt, with

bald skeletons carrying machine guns, anarchy symbols, and blood spattering everywhere, and big letters that say "Skinheads Stomp." Then you got your 99-cent K-Mart back-bin variety that covers all the bases and just says "Hard Rock Music." This is the shirt that Iggy's new album wears.

Instinct has all the right hooks (no left hooks), the Good DrumSound, the approved rebellious posturings, the note-by-numbers guitar solos ad et ceterum. Good solid tunes. Hard schlock music. No dirt, no street, no blood, no fist in your eye, no nothing never. This record is so correctly made it puts me right to fucking sleep.

Yes, Iggy still sounds like your sleazy, gravel-mouthed grandad. Despite zombie titles like "High on You" and "Easy Rider," the lyrics aren't as stooped as you might think. And the band's (with ex-Pistol Steve Jones on guitar) playing is competent, though not quite as inspired as the new ad campaign for Swatch watches. *Instinct* would no doubt sound better on a super fine stereo, but from my shitty little jambox, it just comes out cold.

Wiggly circular truth be told, most folks that really care about the new Iggy album will be listening on shitty little jamboxes and car radios. And as you read this, garbage riffmeisters like Union Carbide Productions or Sonic Youth are out-Stooging the very Ig of which I write. This ain't the Iggy al-

bum they have been waiting for. *Instinct* isn't bad product. But it is product. Processed Iggy food, man.

—Pat Blashill

Steve Coleman and the Five Elements *Sine Die* Pangaea

Alto saxist Steve Coleman is one of the emerging young musicians pointing to possible shapes of music to come. More than that, Coleman, Tim Berne, Geri Allen, Bill Frisell, and others are demonstrating that jazz—a term most musicians have never liked—may be useful now primarily as a historical description. Louis Armstrong and Coleman Hawkins played jazz, for instance; so did Bird and Diz. But how do you categorize the music of Miles Davis from the mid Sixties on? Or of Ornette Coleman, especially with *Prime Time*?

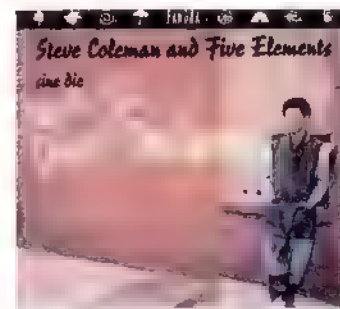
What the younger players do turns on improvisation, but it also relies on arrangements that shape long ensemble parts to an extent rare in jazz (except for big bands and Third Streamers) and more like the rock 'n' roll styles they grew up listening to. As different as their individual approaches are, they share the desire to

cast a broad net for sounds and influences past where self-described jazzers generally reel the line in.

Steve Coleman's own blend is a heady one: bebop, funk, Japanese and Caribbean sounds, heavy metal, rap, and so on. It's so heady, in fact, that his earlier albums seem to fracture under the sheer stress of trying to encompass it. An in-the-pocket groove would suddenly downshift into unaccompanied koto, for instance, and throw the listener through a musical windshield. Instead of creating a sonic field of expansive space, the concepts shrivelled into just the type of freeze-dried compartments they sought to outgrow. Too often all that was left were brilliant moments without a context, gems ripped from a setting.

On *Sine Die*, Coleman fashions a continuous and consistent format that lets his fascinating musical explorations dazzle. One unifier is the various funk-based beats, and the rhythm-section breakdowns jamming on them: David Gilmore's bump-and-grind guitar figures slink through Kevin Bruce Harris's slippery bass coils and Marvin "Smitty" Smith's nail-it-down drums. Another is Cassandra Wilson's warm, supple, wide-open voice: Singing on six of the disc's ten cuts, she becomes a focal point in the swirling soundscape even as she deploys herself in utterly different ways for each tune. And there's Coleman's own alto, of course, with its fierce vocalic cry and its Bird-meets-Maceo high-stepping that only intensifies when he trades off with Branford Marsalis on the opening cut, "Destination."

But the key word here is still change: The album's centerpiece is the two-part "Proteus" and "Proteus Revamp," punningly named after the Greek sea god who could metamorphose himself into literally any shape. If an intruder grabbed and held him



tight, refusing to be frightened off by the horrific monsters he'd transform himself into, Proteus was forced to prophesy. So too with this kaleidoscopic disc: Hold it tight, keep replaying it, and it may foretell a part of music's future while it makes you shake that thing.

—Gene Santoro

SPIN OFFS

BOZ SCAGGS *Other Roads* (Columbia) Back then it seemed like a vast wasteland, that whole mid-Seventies FM radio bit. But time and distance are great healers, and I can look back fondly on things such as Dobie Gray's "Drift Away," or "Lido Shuffle" by the man in question here, Boz Scaggs.

His soulful vocal stylings in that bygone era separated his stuff from the disco-chaff, and they remain as mellifluous as ever—the key word here being vocal. The music on Boz's new one, *Other Roads*, is nothing you haven't heard before: killer drum sounds, mean-but-clean power chords, L.A. studio slickster arrangements. Scaggs's pipes, and Eighties-hepster Jim Carroll's lyrical contributions, save the material from drowning outright, and yet there's a hazy area. Is it solid pop or radio-fodder? Exceptions: the rocker "I Don't Hear You" (great J Carroll image: "She says, Thoughts in my breast/Hang there like a burning curtain"), "Right Out of My Head," which boasts a hip hop solid groove and a wildly melodic B-section. Also, "Mental Shakedown" cuts through nicely, and "Heart of Mine" is Scaggs at his love-croon best.

It would be bitchin' to hear Boz latch into some Neville-esque Crescent City funk, the stuff that bleeds. He could tear it up. But he seems satisfied providing his pop service, even if he keeps it just above fast-food level. The bottom line: If these tunes appear on my car radio, I'll turn 'em up. And that's a pretty good compliment

—Judd Fuller

KONK *Konk Jams* (Dog Brothers)

Since 1982, Konk has been a quark-like dance music phenomenon manifesting itself every year or so with a hot underground dance single and on rare occasions materializing with live musicians in mostly New York clubs. Their revelatory first single, "Konk Party," mixed squawling Fela-esque saxophones with plenty of street-beat Latin percussion and almost lame, just-deadpan-enough chants in English and Spanish. Subsequent jams got slicker but retained healthy doses of Latin rhythm and horny horns—as

well as vaguely lunatic vocal scraps and dialogue. Yes, with *World Beat* now a buzzword, Konk was ahead of their time.

Right on time is this collection of all their single hits and a couple of noteworthy new jams. "Acid Jam" gives nearly ten minutes of neo-house overlaid with *de rigueur* samples, a mass voice chant, and sound effects, all held together with the repeated monotone phrase, "My mind is going." "4th Version" the other new shot, is a steamy percussion workout melded with a disco stomp intercut with samples of JB, Elmer Fudd, movie dialogue, and other effluvia. In short, *Konk Jams* makes Konk easily accessible to the world—a most welcome, long overdue development.

—Randall Grass

Cajun & Swamp Pop Super Hits (Jin)

"Cajun Swamp Pop" and "Super Hits" are, of course, radically incongruous terms—the biggest hit herein, Cookie and the Cupcakes' weepy rocker "Mathilda" got up to 47 on the *Billboard* chart in January '59—but the hyperbole does serve as apt description of the sounds themselves. Samplers are usually pretty spotty but track for track this hodgepodge of novelties and hard-to-finds is pretty unreal. It's like a radio show you'd hear while cruising along Interstate 10 in your dreams—both you and the deejay are blitzed, goofy, and in the mind to bop. It performs the service of collecting the obscure Rufus Jagneaux gem "Opelousas Sostan," Johnnie Allan's take on Chuck Berry's "Promised Land" (replete with accordion breaks), and Doug Kershaw and Fats Domino's superior version of "Toot Toot," but the amazing track is Cypress City's "The Cajun Rap Song." A surprisingly funky toss-off, it is a fiddle-bridged and self-effacing discourse on bayou recreation which proves just how widely the Beastie Boys have been heard. It's the rockiest novelty since "Gitarzan." And, speaking of Ray Stevens, there's a French version of "The Streak" by Belton Richard that will be the basis of my doctoral thesis if I ever go back to school.

—Don Howland

KREATOR *Terrible Certainty* (Noise International)

Like the corrosive buzz that fills your skull at the denouement of a Sunday long bout of putting hair o'er the dog of a particularly desperate Sat'day nite. Or like the skulking unease of imagined inadequacy as a parent, employee, or occasional outfielder that suddenly erupts into white hot lunatic violence with your life-mate when your sack-performance is graded C+ one time too many. Spin it, don't be it!

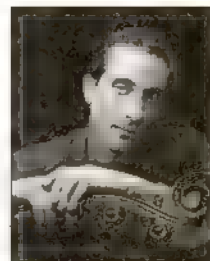
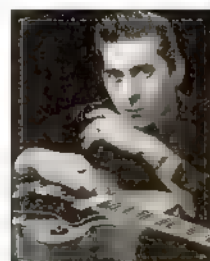
—L. Kady

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thunderstorms
saturday night fish fries
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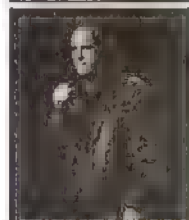
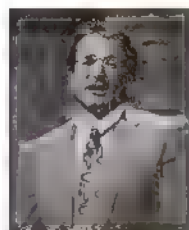
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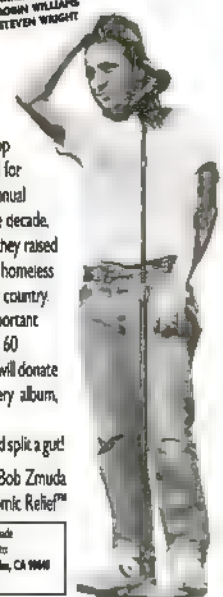
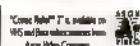
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Opposite: Iggy Pop. Has the street-walkin' cheetah with a heart full of napalm become a pussycat?

SINGLES



Dore Gottlieb

Column by John Leland

"We in Chicago don't consider borrowing ideas from old records stealing," producer Chip E. told Barry Walters in *SPIN* two years ago. "After all, a deejay's job is to take something old and create something new out of it."

The digital sampling device has changed not only the sound of pop music, but also the mythology. It has done what punk rock threatened to do: made everybody into a potential musician, bridged the gap between performer and audience until it is no more than that between deejay and dancer. Being good on the sampler is often a matter of knowing what to sample, what pieces to lift off what records; you learn the trade by listening to music, which makes it an extension more of fandom than musicianship. Talent and taste converge, as technical obstacles—the formality of learning to play an instrument, for example—recede. Within its limited domain, the digital sampler has replaced the musician with the fan.

Because hip hop and dance music embrace new technology more read-

ily than the mainstream—which is one reason they're so much more advanced—they've adapted most to the machine. But because the mainstream ultimately gets its new ideas and stars from hip hop and disco, we can expect to hear Top 40 records driven by samples in the next year or two. "Pump Up the Volume" was only the beginning.

For **Todd Terry**, whose recent sample-happy singles have moved people like no others, the machine offers complete anonymity. His most powerful and best records, **Royal House's** "Party People" and "Can You Party" (Idlers) and the **Todd Terry Project's** "Bango"/"Back to the Beat" (Fresh), raid the vocabulary of New York and Chicago house music, and recombine the best phrases. He turns dance music into a closed environment, a history bent on repeating itself. And though his records have a distinctive sound, they don't have a real underlying personality in the way, say, Madonna records do; they have personalities as records, not as persons. His music celebrates itself and its audience more than its author. This is a sacrifice that punk rock never made. Other good

Todd Terry records: "A Day in the Life"/"Warlock" by **Black Riot** (Fourth Floor) and "The Texican"/"Dreams of Santa Anna" by **Orange Lemon** (Idlers)

Information Society is a white synthesizer rock group from Minneapolis that two years ago found itself by accident with a No. 1 dance record in Miami and a big hit among Latin dancers in New York. I suppose stranger things have happened. On their second single, "What's on Your Mind (Pure Energy)" (Tommy Boy), produced by Fred Maher of Scritti Politti, they got their subtitle from a sample lifted from "Star Trek." When Paramount hesitated in releasing the sample, the group played the record for Leonard Nimoy, who agreed to rerecord the phrase if Paramount didn't relent. It did, and "What's on Your Mind" became a stirring, dense reminder of how much European dance records like New Order's "Blue Monday" form the basis of the new Latin disco. It's also a pretty potent dance record.

Because they place sensibilities ahead of personalities, sample records assert a kind of community. "Pump Up the

Volume" speaks more about its audience than about the anonymous M/A/R/R/S. It is a limited claim, because the vocabulary is so limited—in fact, the process is an act of limiting, of reducing all musical content to music itself—but these days, any sense of community through music is rare. Like "Pump Up the Volume," "Beat Dis" by the equally anonymous **Bomb the Bass** (4th & B'way) combines hip hop samples—Public Enemy, Starski—with snatches of old disco records and a house groove to define the spectrum of British club music. "Beat Dis" is a dance record for restless times: it offers a new look every fifteen seconds, each one fresh but familiar. It is, needless to say, a huge hit in England, another reminder of the American indie bands' failure to produce this kind of humble but flashy, temporary excitement.

A little less exciting but just as big is **S-Express's** "Theme From S-Express" (Capitol), which is probably just as well-intentioned, but seems like this year's Frankie Goes to Hollywood or Sigue Sigue Sputnik. The concept is sound, the rhythm is adequate to the occasion, and it does any listener good to hear Karen Finley chant "Suck me off, suck me off" and get credit for it; but in a musical subgenre that is concerned above all else with taste, bad taste seems too easy.

And at the end of it all, if I'm not dancing I miss personality, and will probably play the **Jellybean** record more than anything above.

THE A-LIST:

Jellybean, "Jingo" (Chrysalis)
Eric B. & Rakim, "Follow the Leader" (Uni/MCA)
These Immortal Souls, "Marry Me (Lie Lie)"/"Open Up and Bleed" & "Blood and Sand" She Said" (SST)
Public Enemy, "Don't Believe the Hype" (Def Jam/Columbia)
Sequal, "I'm Over You" (Capitol)
J.V.C. Force, "Call It What You Wanna"/"My Love Tune" (B-Boy)
Tony! Toni! Tone!, "Little Walter" (PolyGram)
Masters of Ceremony, "Dynamite" (4th & B'way)
Rick James featuring Roxanne Shanté, "Loosey's Rap" (Reprise)
Chandra Simmons, "We Can Dance" (Fresh)
Antoinette, "Unfinished Business" (Next Plateau)
Evelyn "Champagne" King, "Flirt" (Manhattan)
True Mathematics, "For the Money" (Select)
Teddy Pendergrass, "Joy" (Elektra)
Skinny Boys, "Get Pepped" (Jive/RCA)
Sonic Youth, "Master-Dik" (SST)
Don Baron, "DJ Imitators" (Uni/MCA)
Johnny Kemp, "Just Got Paid" (Columbia) ②

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JAZZ

Article by Mike Zwerin

GOLD RIVER, SIBERIA. Earlier this year, a letter arrived from a mad Russian acquaintance informing me that his plans for a Tashkent Jazz Festival were now "misty." He said: "The date moves maybe to next year, or even another city. Like in that known joke—everything is accurately right except not he but she, not wins but loses, not money but husband. I will keep you informed when and if the swinging camels are jazzin' up our perestroika."

That appeared to be that. Then, out of a colder mist, came a telegram of invitation from a genial Siberian. So it turned out to be not Tashkent but Novosibirsk, not a festival but a "symposium," not camels but scientists. In the very birthplace of perestroika.

The Second Symposium of New Jazz Music, "Gold Valley, '88," was held May 11-15 in Akademgorodok (Academy Town), a self-contained think-tank of medium-rise buildings in a birch tree forest in the exurbs of Novosibirsk. Academy Town's population of 100,000 consists of the academic community and those who provide services for them. It was founded thirty years ago by scientists with pioneering spirits who first saw this dip in the plain in the autumn, when the trees are a riot of color, and called it "Gold Valley."

Professor Abel Aganbegyan, founder of the Siberian Institute of Economics, has been advocating economic reform since the Sixties. He was also a leader in the fight against the plan to reverse the flow of Siberian rivers, citing inevitable ecological and economic disaster. The plan was cancelled by Mikhail Gorbachev, who brought Aganbegyan to Moscow as a high level advisor when he assumed power in 1985. In 1983, Dr. Tatiana Zasiavskaya, Aganbegyan's student



and successor as the Institute's director, had written a paper calling for more market forces and less planning in the Soviet economy. She too is now a senior Gorbachev aide. Residents of Akademgorodok liken it to Cambridge.

Formalities for a journalist's visa in Paris and—although I was traveling with a trombone case and was part of no group—customs in Moscow went easily and with maximum courtesy. Glasnost in action. At Chermetevo, Moscow's international airport, a bevy of taxi drivers hustled for black market dollars and quoted outrageous prices for the 45 minute ride to Vnukova airport, from which I flew over four time zones to Novosibirsk.

There are now something like thirty full-time jazz musicians in the USSR, though something of a stigma remains attached, and "Gold Valley '88" organizer Sergei Belichenko covered his

tracks with a serious letterhead. This was a "symposium," not a festival, and the organizing committee was named "The Center of Studies on Folklore Activity and Cultural Public Education." Actually it was an old-fashioned, if newfangled, jazz festival.

A 1978 interview with Belichenko, who is a gynecologist and a drummer, was reprinted in the book *Russian Jazz, New Identity*. He is quoted: "... I think that avant-garde jazz is one of the most significant artistic phenomena of the century. I do not accept that it should be called 'black music'—the music is above all such ethnic criteria."

Daytime seminars covered topics like "The Aesthetics of New Jazz." Blues and 4/4 time were rare during the evening concerts. Except for myself and the East German trombonist Conrad Bauer, the participants were all Soviet citizens—maybe half were

Siberian residents, with others from as far away as Lithuania. The site was "Science House," a modern and well-maintained office building and cultural center in the middle of the complex with a 1,000-seat state-of-the-art auditorium, and a tropical forest inside a two-story atrium.

The event was referred to as "Belichenko's Miracle." Bringing more than 200 participants here to central Siberia had taken several years of work and planning and, it was generally agreed, simply could not have happened in pre-perestroika Russia. He convinced the Komsomol regional committee to sponsor the event, cajoled other Komsomol committees to pay to send local bands, and even picked up a "private" sponsor, Vega—a manufacturer of sound reproduction equipment—which displayed its wares in the lobby. One State enterprise paying to advertise in competition with others like it is, a musician told me, "mindblowing." Belichenko ordered buttons and posters which were sold at a mark-up. He sent telegrams and made long-distance calls with only a marginal chance to recoup the expense. He arranged hotel reservations, plane and train transportation, engaged the (excellent) sound engineers, was conceiver, producer, artistic director, and genial host. It was not really surprising that he had trouble keeping his eyes open when he played drums in the pick-up band he'd put together for me.

He commissioned the banner that hung over the stage. On it was a friendly bear playing a bass fiddle over the words (in English): "Peace, Love, and Jazz Supreme."

The group "Archangel'sk" from the northern city of the same name unfurled a banner of their own with the word "glasnost" without vowels—on it while they performed some of their alternately furious and tender and always fearlessly abstract collective improvisations. Since "vowel" is another definition of glasnost, vowel without vowels implies openness without freedom. Keyboardist Vladimir Turov explained: "Theoretically we have always had freedom of speech, even under Stalin. We wanted to remind the people that you have to work for freedom. We had doubts about the banner and there were long discussions before the concert. But jazz is a cry for freedom and it is important for us to express something of our history through our music."

Mikhail Alperin, a Jewish pianist from the Moldavian Republic, on the Romanian border, played a fascinating solo set utilizing his ethnic roots mixed with ragtime, Bartók, and snatches of "Caravan" and Bud Powell's "Parisian Thoroughfare."

Saxophonist Vladimir Checkasin and percussionist Vladimir Tarasov, two of the leading jazzmen in the country, performed in duo. There were bands from Omsk, Tomsk, Kemerovo, Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad), Tbilisi, Moscow, and Leningrad. Sometimes intention was better than execution but quality was not really the point. These people do not get together very often—the first "symposium" was ten years ago, and that was mainly *musique contemporaine*. Just being here was the point.

Belichenko arranged an after-concert party for a dozen of us in a sauna on an army base about a half hour's drive from Science House. There was black bread, sausage, cheese, and chicken roasted on a spit. We took swigs of a rose-colored liquid from a jug bearing the home-made label "Benzina." "Moldavian Moonshine," it was explained. As the last of it was poured, and somebody asked if there was any more, the reply was "oceans."

Since the Gorbachev campaign to diminish the enormous (it must be admitted) problem of alcoholism in the Soviet Union, you do not buy booze, you score it. Normal-looking people walk around with bottles of bathtub vodka in their briefcases. The conversation grew more animated, the laughter more hysterical, the inevitable spate of Socialist jokes more rapid.

What's the difference between the Soviet Union before and after Gorbachev?

Before, if you were standing on the street with a bottle of vodka and a Western newspaper and a policeman appeared, you would hide the newspaper and drink. Now you hide the bottle and read.

Within the context of the ever-mounting conviviality, I assumed the irony would be apparent when I toasted, "Here's to the Evil Empire." However a certain pall descended over the towel-wrapped gathering, and a critic from Leningrad responded, "I hope this won't shock you, but I think Reagan was right. It was an evil empire. Rarely has a government been so distant from its own people as we were under Brezhnev."

"Were?!" exclaimed a cynic. "Gorbachev says write what you want, so now we read everything. But what difference does it make? We read about all of the shit we're in but we're still in it."

Whatever openings there may be in the intellectual life, the physical remains as grungy as ever. Akademgorodok is a privileged place, for an elite. A Westerner accustomed to cold climes would feel only marginally un-

comfortable there. Physical reality hit hard one afternoon when a group of us drove the 35 kilometers to Novosibirsk proper (total population: 2 million). There were the long lines outside the stores. "You do not go shopping in Novosibirsk," it was explained, "you go hunting." The streets reeked of foul black-belching diesel oil. A restaurant we went to was a realization of the worst Socialist nightmares—filth, lack of proportion, nasty service, boredom, and terminal hopelessness.

Plates of cold meat awaiting us on a tablecloth with highly suspicious

brown stains looked as though they had been there for days. The lack of style brought out latent resentment against general stylelessness. A trombone player said that Soviet-manufactured trombones make fine fishing rods; a filmmaker added that his 35mm camera was great for hammering nails. When someone requested a match, I handed him a box I happened to have which promoted a fancy Parisian restaurant. He compared the glossy cardboard and its sharply-printed, brightly-colored drawing of a smiling man in a tuxedo to his own shabby wooden box with its faded label de-

picting some revolutionary (maybe no longer) hero in an heroic pose. He held a box in each hand, displaying them to us and shook his head. No words were necessary.

Then we walked around the city's monumental opera house to the underwhelming "Jazz Cafe" behind it. Listening to a tenorman play Charlie Parker's introduction to "All the Things You Are," I recalled hearing Bird himself play that in 1948, forty years ago, on 52nd Street. Now it has become part of the song, even in

Continued on page 89

It's all brains from the neck down.

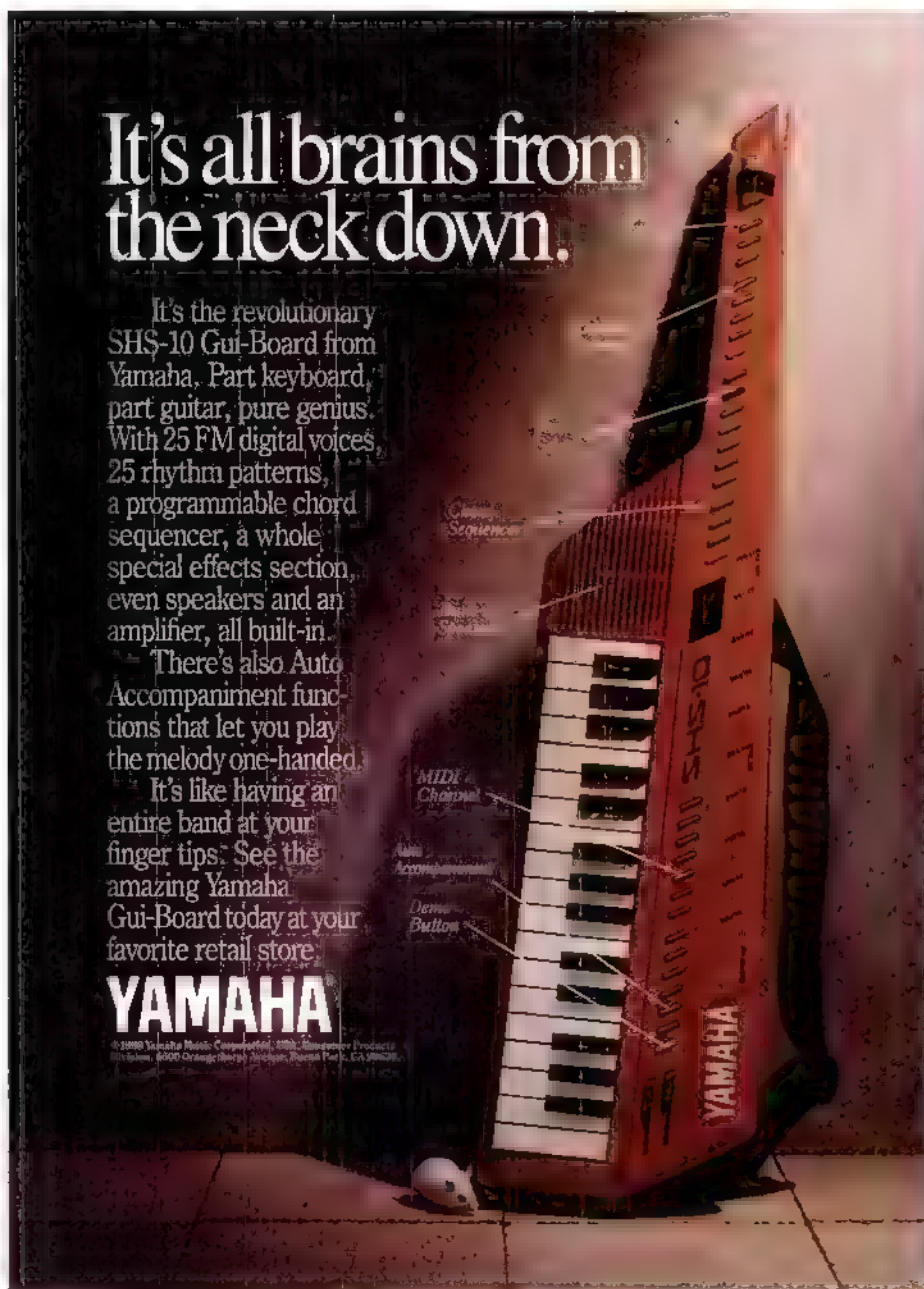
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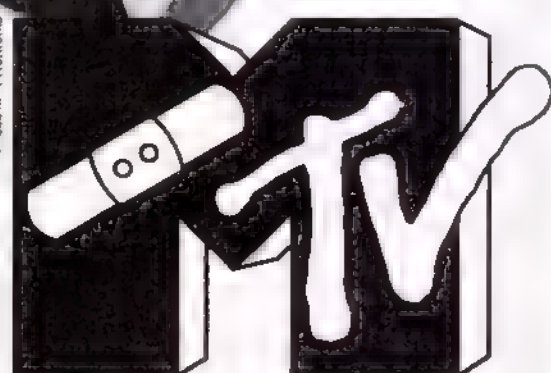
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Tav Falco's
Panther Burns. Also:
the Honeymoon Killers,
Giant Sand,
Thin White Rope, Blurt,
27 Devils Joking.

Column by Byron
Coley



You wouldn't know it by their domestic label situation (they don't have one), but a little combo called **Panther Burns**, from Memphis, has been one of our nation's heaviest pan-generic brain-cup smashers since the pup's end of the Seventies. Begun and led by blues archivist Gustavo "Tav" Falco, aided by murk-pop scientist Alex Chilton, their earliest shows featured such McLuhanesque anti-music touches as guitars chainsawed in twain (perhaps the true Modern Dance) and bursts of croaking tango heat that would make a Peronist spit chunks. Splicing every popular music form they could remember with a few they made up, Panther Burns eventually produced a large body of ungodly listenable (and danceable) muse-rush. And you needn't take my word for it. Virtually their entire discography is in print this very second (a rarity for bands to which I cleave), so I'll brook no excuses when I quiz you on this stuff in the fall.

Panther Burns began with a self-released, nameless EP in 1979. Covering "Train Kept a Rollin'," Cordell Jackson's "Dateless Night," and two more, the combo lived on lo-

fi grunge whiplash. Tav's vocal whoops, Chilton's dull-white guitar-flame, the squee of a wild-card synthesizer, and the snap-lashed rhythms bash their heads through the crumbling sonics to make their presence known. If you're lucky, you'll be able to find someone to sell you a copy for a lotta money.

In '81 Panther Burns released their first LP, *Behind the Magnolia Curtain*. If people thought that the band's sound was an aberration or a one-shot jape in the style of the Klitz (an associated Memphis band of the day), this album kicked the teeth outta that idea, but good. Assisted by the Tate County Mississippi Drums Corps, Tav, Alex, new guitarist Jim Duckworth, bassist Ron Miller (a former associate of the Art Ensemble's Don Moye), and tubster Ross Johnson cut one of the wildest 'billy-based blue-noise scoots that this reporter has had the pleasure to enjoy. Best bits are the instrumental buzz 'n' blather of R.L. Burnside's "Snake Drive" and the thoroughly hepsterized take of Leadbelly's "Bourgeois Blues" (live renditions sometimes included a complete reading of Allen Ginsberg's "Howl") Hrooing like a train in God's butt-tunnel, the original Rough Trade album has been outta print for a while, but New Rose in France recently reissued it in a "twofer" package with its follow-up, the *Blow Your Top!* mini-LP.

Blow Your Top! (1981) was recorded by the band's touring line-up with Jim Sclavunos (ex-Teenage Jesus, 8-Eyed Spy, No Group, etc.) replacing Memphis-bound drummer Johnson. The shows that preceded this record were absolute tit-burners, but the disc itself is far too laid-back to rank with the band's best. Many



fans blamed this softness on Chris Stein (who ran the label for which it was recorded), but let's just say I d don't jump through a hoop when this got reissued.

For the next three years Panther Burns did the occasional outta town show, and though news of wild recording sessions filtered in from Memphis, not one graspable piece of vinyl emerged. Finally in '85, New Rose put out *Sugar Ditch Revisited*. A gorgeous, fat album, *Sugar Ditch* is Tav's first stab at documenting the history of funky Memphis; it sounds as good as lube grease squirting into a

young pig. With a new line-up that included the legendary, southern-fried Jim Dickenson and Chilton's bassist Rene Coman, the record is jammed-up jelly tight. My fave track's "Tina the Go Go Queen" (a chunky obscurity by Stax outcast, Sir Mack Rice), but there's nary a stinker aboard.

The next Panther Burns record, the *Shake Rag* LP (New Rose import), was another piece of off-the-wall roots-digging. Playing a weird, jumpy, electric kind of country blues, Tav

Panther Burns' Gustavo "Tav" Falco.

UNDERGROUND

UNDERGROUND

and a stripped-down band whipped through more fucked-up covers like "Warrior Sam" and "Shade Tree Mechanic," creating a new type of post-stroll hurricane in the process. The first copies of the LP also included a wild seven-song live album called *Now*. Originally released by the band as a cassette, then released in Scotland (again as a cassette) by Next Big Thing, the French giveaway was its first vinylization. There still aren't studio versions of some of the best stuff, like "Stark Weather" (about Charlie "and his girl"), so don't even think about not chasing it down in some form. After *Magnolia Curtain* it's the king dilly.

There hasn't really been a slouchy Panther Burns record since '82, though. And the band that Tav put together in '87 or so to record *The World We Knew* (New Rose import) sounds like it may be the best he's ever had. With Coman and Johnson as returning vets, the new secret weapon is guitarist George Reinecke.



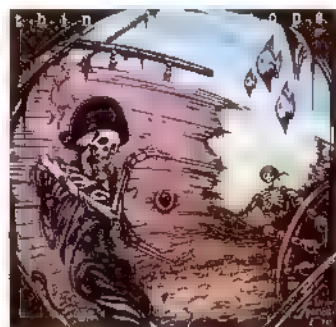
I'd initially supposed that the zizzing, warped string-hubbles that pop up on the disc were Chilton's, but after seeing the band live (sans Alex) I realized that George was the actual noise. George tweaks aural beezers right and left, allowing the band plenty of room to dance on the grave of the South's forgotten musical legacy. They swipe more wobbly brain-fodder from the pen of Mack Rice ("Ditch Digging") and the sublime "Do the Robot", but p-burn more well-known songs (like "She's a Bad Motorcycle") so efficiently that the record serves as the central documentation of a southern pop underground that never existed previously. It's valuable.

The most recent release by this bunch is *Red Devil*, available as a 10-inch LP from New Rose (who initially issued a truncated version as a box of 45s) or as a regular LP from Right Side Records (Box 670, Station A, Toronto,

Canada M5W 1G2). Including a fine cover of Lee Hazlewood's exceptional "Poor Man," it also features all kinds of hybridized action, from country-blue-wallers to American Indian tangos. Like everything the band does, *Red Devil* is soaked in the sweat of cultural archaeologists drunk on the discovery of lost chords galore. Listen to the pagan swamp bang of "Ode to Shetar" while wiggling with a loved one in a bathtub full of gin and olives. I can think of few finer things.

Since the days (long ago) when there was band called the Giant Sand worms, Howe Gelb's name has been pretty near the top of the Arizonan write/sing pantheon. He lives out in L.A. now, but *Giant Sand's Storm* (What Goes On, Box 169, 151 First Ave., NYC 10003) would sound a whole lot different if much desert sun hadn't seared Howe's ass but good. Listen close to the crackling, smashed, post-industrial blues of "Back to Black and Grey" and you can hear the tar bubbling and your footskin frying when it touches what looked to be inviting pavement. Or hear the way the sensitive-flattening chords form behind the drawl in "Right Makes Right," smashing up similar forays by Green on Red and Naked Prey (both fellow cactus emigres) in the process. 'Twould not have happened without a childhood spent in a low-humidity environment.

Guy Kyser's voice, like that of Chris D. and Neil Young, is unusual enough that people don't just let it slide. They either love its weedy thora-soar or they loathe it; there's no middle ground. I count myself amongst its supporters and have spent no little time during the last month listening to the new LP by Guy's band, *Thin White Rope*. In the Spanish Cave (Frontier, PO Box 22, Sun Valley, CA 91353) is probably the least jittery, most straight ahead of the band's three, but that doesn't mean it blows. *Au contraire*, by attacking the material in a more forthright (sometimes almost metallic) way, *Thin White Rope* should be able



to dodge some of the sissy-baiting that's haunted them in the past. Nobody but a bonaroo he-man could have possibly crafted the riff-thunkage on tunes like "It's OK" or "Red Sun," or so it might seem, even though the band ends up seeming no more macho than a Mike Love-less version of the late Sixties Beach Boys might have been. *Thin White Rope* take a certain kind of California sound (Davis drug-pop) to new and masterful places.

My grasp of *Blurt's* discography is tenuous (anybody know exactly how many records there are?), but my feelings about them are very real. So I was plenty happy that *Moving Target* (330 Hudson St., NYC 10013) has put



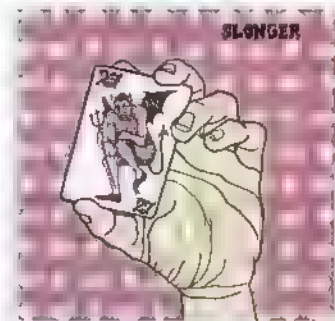
out their *Smoke Time* LP, their first U.S. release since their '81 debut. Fronted by brainiacal, sax-chewing poet Ted Milton, *Blurt* is a British trio who're harder to tag than any wild pig. The Contortion-oid hunk of their early sound pretty well matched their name, but this new stuff has textural similarities to everything from those great Wyatt/Cutler collaborations of the early Seventies to some unholy merger between post-No Wave skronk and Euro-style Rock in Opposition.

Some of my pals, even some of my smarter pals, have long written off the *Honeymoon Killers* as purveyors of something less-than-great. And I may agree that the band's "originality" isn't really all that original, but their records still sound good to a know-little wahoo like myself. Take, for instance, their fourth longplayer, *Turn Me On* (Buy Our Records, PO Box 363, Vauxhall, NJ 07088). On this righteously okay platter, the Killers (during their short lived "Cristina" phase) take their basic Cramps-in-a-Loisaida-guitar-battle methodology and merge it with Pussy Galore-ish metal-splat rhythms, plus a BIGGER overall feed-psych heft. And this means that a lotta what's on here is musically footnotable, but the sources are boss and the actual reorganization takes more raw

inventiveness than most bands could muster.

27 Devils Joking are a New Mexico band in the long tradition of sand-fried speed weiners. Their first LP, *Actual Toons*, was an unexpected burst of loud Sixties-Eighties crossover-pow, and their new one, *Slonger* (Live Wire, PO Box 1222, Santa Fe, NM 87504), is cut from the same kinda cloth. They've added a new guitar player, though, and he pulls some repeato-niffery that will make a lotta theoretically psychedelic morons jealous if they ever hear it. Over a jumbled post-blooze background (that occasionally sounds like the Buttholes playing for hambones), the guitar does some serious dicing and slicing while the vocals bury themselves in the metallic piles. Very gear.

Life has been a dark goddamn night for Boston's **Dredd Foole & the Din**. Initially formed as a wise-ass Stooges-Flesheaters tribute project by Dan Ireton and Mission of Burma, the band has spent the better part of a decade living on the fringes of existence. Membership has been fluid (I'll give a copy of this album to the first person who can tell me who's in the band right now) and gigs have often had to be planned around the activities of members' other combos (Volcano Suns, Moving Targets). And let's face it, far too many haircut dips have forgotten how to enjoy the power of pure, loud mania, which is what the Din has always delivered, no matter



who's pulling the strings. If you've got enough of a brain to realize that there are few things better than being smacked across the room by a guitar chord and a guttural shout, Dredd Foole's new LP, *Take Off Your Skin* (PVC), is your cup of blood. It contains long-standing live faves that're as beautifully-wrought as any hole-in-one, plus a growling cover of "Slack" (first recorded by Minneapolis legends NNB) that will make your hair fall out.

Reach me, if you must, at P.O. Box 301, West Somerville, MA 02144. ☺

like that do? They don't even know for sure if HIV is the real cause of AIDS, so why is her doctor treating her like she's already dead? That's the kind of thing I'm talking about."

"What are you talking about? Of course HIV is the cause of AIDS. How can you say it's not?"

"I didn't say it's not," I say as calmly as I can. "I just said that they're not 100 percent certain anymore. Even Gallo himself said that HBLV is a definite cofactor in the development of AIDS, so that must mean that HIV alone may not cause AIDS."

A Swedish social worker joins the conversation. I tell him about Duesberg's theory that HIV isn't the cause of AIDS. Within five minutes he's screaming at the top of his lungs, his face bright red, his index finger jabbing my shoulder.

"YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO DENY REALITY! EVERY SINGLE PERSON WHO GETS HIV IS GOING TO DIE MAYBE NOT TODAY OR TOMORROW, BUT EVENTUALLY."

Another Swede, a researcher, joins in. "You're the one who's denying reality," he says to the social worker. "If you knew anything about the mechanisms of HIV you would be skeptical of it too. You're not being objective."

"I AM BEING OBJECTIVE. ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT PEOPLE DON'T USE CONDOMS? IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT?"

"No, of course not . . ."

Jim walks up and pulls me gently away from them, saying he has somebody he wants me to meet. "I should have told you," he says. "Whatever you do, DON'T mention Duesberg here. Just don't even mention him. I brought him up at a press conference yesterday, and this crazy Swedish woman followed me around for a half hour, yelling at me."

Jim takes off and I keep walking. This particular stretch of the conference is focused on AIDS prevention and education. There are condoms in every color and instructions on how to use them in every language. Video screens are everywhere, with naked couples, heterosexual and homosexual, caressing each other while somber narrators talk about the HIV threat and how to have safer sex. "Bleachman," the AIDS-prevention superhero created by the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, is standing in full costume, dressed as a jug of bleach, handing out leaflets about cleaning needles, and two Danish junkies have a poster exhibition that says that it's not being a junkie that gives you AIDS—it's dirty needles. The posters explain how you can keep shooting drugs, as long as you clean your works.

Back in the press room, reporters are trying very hard not to panic. "Does anybody know what's really going on

here?" I ask the woman from *Le Monde* at the next typewriter. "No, not really," she says, "but you're not supposed to at conferences like this. How could you?" I remember what the chairman of the conference, Lars Olof Kallings, said in his introductory speech. "A scientific conference can be looked upon as a mosaic, in this case with more than 3,000 pieces. Each piece, however well-shaped and beautiful, does not tell us very much. But when the pieces are put together a picture develops . . ."

Thursday, June 16.

Mathilde Krim, Chairman of AmFAR, the American Foundation for AIDS Research, is sitting at a small table in the AmFAR booth. I ask her how she feels about the conference.

"I feel that on the scientific front, they're going for a period of consolidation. For the first time in the history of this epidemic, we know what we're dealing with, and there are solid foundations built to address the problem. For the first time, I think, we're seeing AIDS the right way."

"More so than at the last conference?" I ask.

"Yes, much more so. The Washington meeting was very divided. There was a kind of anger in the air that was very destructive. It was against government inaction. Every public official who appeared at that conference was booed. That mood is gone today. I don't see that here."

"You don't think that's just because we're in Sweden?" I ask. "Just last week Larry Kramer called them all murderers in his article in the *Village Voice* . . ."

"Yes, maybe you're right. Maybe when we go home we'll realize that it's still the same, but here, there's definitely a better feeling, a feeling of togetherness."

She goes on to say that she's in awe of the sexual openness of the Swedish society, and walks me over to the neighboring stand where dozens of sex education books are on display. "Do you know the story of the little rabbits?" Krim giggles and pulls one of the books off the rack. "There's this hilarious cartoon about the rabbits . . ." She shows me the cartoon. "They're in love, I think. I don't understand the story because it's in Swedish, but it's very funny." She points to one of the cartoons, one of a rabbit holding his genitals and looking sad. I translate the caption. "Oy, oy, oy. Now what has happened to me?" Mathilde Krim roars with laughter.

The closing ceremony is identical to the opening one. A new collection of AIDS experts steps up to the podium to speak. And speak and speak and speak. Two people in the United States will have died of AIDS before the first speaker is finished.

Outside, the weather in Stockholm is still perfect.

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soon as we turned the corner, Scott started leaning over. Scotty looked up and saw all the blood."

Scott La Rock died the following day in Misericordia Hospital in the Bronx, from bullet wounds in the head and neck. He was 25. A week later, on September 3, KRS-One performed at Madison Square Garden, sharing the stage with two unattended turntables. All of the performers on the bill dedicated the show to Scott La Rock.

By two o'clock on a spring afternoon, the well-fed players from the local police hangout start to vie with the Little Leaguers for the new baseball fields in Prospect Park, Brooklyn. Montgomery Clift was buried here 22 years ago; more recently, the park made the news when local teenagers poured lighter fluid on a sleeping homeless man and lit him on fire. Today, talk is of baseball and a possible subway series. As we enter the park, KRS-One laughs loudly. "Yo," he says. "I used to sleep here."

On the cover of Boogie Down Productions' new album, *By All Means Necessary*, KRS-One stands by a window with an Uzi above his head, posed like Malcolm X in the familiar photograph that bears the same credo in Prospect Park, all that remains of that image is the sunglasses. He smiles volubly, incessantly, as he adjusts the grey suit his wife, Ms. Melodie, bought for him. The album has sold 219,000 copies in just over two weeks, with next to no radio play. Kris, as his friends call him, is in a very good mood. "All this can be printed," he says. "This is my life, this is the truth. Make a movie out of it."

He was born Lawrence John Parker, the son of an aspiring academic and a man who left before the child arrived. His mother, Jacqueline, held secretarial jobs when she could, and went on welfare when she couldn't. She was working toward her doctorate in education, and was adamant on the subject. In their Fiske Place apartment in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn, she gave Lawrence and his brother Kenny nightly lessons in black history and science, things they were not learning in school.

"But at the end of the conversation," he remembers, "we would eat the same things we ate every night: rice, butter, rice, salt, oatmeal, sugar, oatmeal, no sugar, oatmeal, salt. This is straight up. We would pick a day and say, 'This Monday we're not going to eat anything till Wednesday. And the one who eats something on Monday doesn't get the surprise on Wednesday.' This was the psychology she had to use."

Once KRS-One starts talking, it's best just to sit back and try to tally the damage as it occurs. He speaks with the same asymmetric cadences and logic with which he raps, laughing fre-

quently at his own pedantry and then darting into a seemingly unrelated topic. As a rapper, he calls himself the teacher, and his rhymes—which have names like "Poetry," "Elementary," "T'cha-T'cha," and "My Philosophy"—are a conversational mixture of violence and intellect, a destabilized classroom: *I don't battle with knives, I battle with guns/Knowledge reigns supreme over nearly everyone/ If you take the first letter of what I just sung/You spell my name KRS-One*

The first time he saw a homeless shelter, he thought, "What is this, a headquarters for the bums? This is mad." Then he went inside.

By the time he entered William E. Grady Vocational High School, he and his mother were no longer getting along. His grades were bad, and the principal was sending notes home, threatening to expel him. His mother accused him of bribing teachers to pass him. "You could take it on a philosophical sense or a maternal sense," he says. "Material sense meaning my schoolwork was messing up, I wasn't her ideal child anymore. Also, she started griping because she wanted to get away, do research all over the world, but we were holding her down. My mind then was changing. I was taking everything from a philosophical point of view, which reinforced my theory on why I should go and rhyme about this. My mother wasn't into it. I never liked to hang around people who was a negative influence." At age 13, he left home and began living on the subways. When he decided the subways were too dangerous, he went to live in Prospect Park.

At the north end of Prospect Park, across from the grant arch, the Brooklyn Public Library stands as a monolithic, poorly-run monument to higher learning. On spring days, people sun themselves on its concrete plaza, shouting over the roar from the adjacent traffic circle; in foul weather, the library affords homeless people from the neighborhood a few hours of shelter from the elements. After he left home, KRS-One began to spend his days in the library, losing himself in books about metaphysics, reincarnation, numerology, ESP, theology, karma, religion. "Every day," he says, "my job was to read books in that library and to eat. You had to keep your mind active, because out on the street, that ball and chain is always dragging

you down to go to sleep and forget it all. I used to find that when I slept, my dreams were always positive dreams. It was always the best things in the world was when you were sleeping. You're never hungry when you're sleeping; somebody could just kill you and you would never know it."

He lived off whatever he could steal from local fruit and vegetable stands, and slept on park benches, after discovering that sleeping on the grass meant waking up soaked with dew. In winter, he learned to judge wind patterns and huddled for shelter in the park's open structures. Since his readings cut him off from most other kids his age—one friend's mother accused him of worshipping the devil, even after he talked her son away from suicide—he spent most of his time alone.

"Every day was a new day," he says. "Today, yesterday was forgotten. You move on. You have to think like that or you'll fall into depression. You start to be like the rest of the so-called bums you see laying on the sidewalk, thinking they can never get out of their situation. I used to pray when I woke up, pray during the day, and pray going to sleep. I had faith in myself. I knew it was just a matter of time. It was like I was serving a jail sentence. It was like it was something I had to learn, and I'd be through with this at any time. One day, someone was just going to come up and say, 'Hey, you're Kris, aren't you? Well here's a contract, two million.'" One morning he woke up and walked into Manhattan, wandering through Chinatown and eventually past the Third Street Men's Shelter by the Bowery. "I thought, 'What is this, a headquarters for the bums? This place is mad.'" He hadn't eaten a hot meal for about six months. When he found he could get one inside, he began what would become a four-year stay in the city's homeless shelter system.

Eight months after the murder of Scott Sterling, KRS-One is set to go to Europe for the first time. His wife, Ms Melodie, has a hit single in England, and D-Nice, the third wing of Boogie Down Productions, will have a record out by the end of the summer. The police file on La Rock's case remains open, and detectives in the Bronx won't discuss it. No, KRS-One tells me, he doesn't know what happened to the killers. He'd love to confirm the rumor that he took care of them, but he can't. He had heard that one of them was dead, though.

On *Criminal Minds*, KRS-One raps in the first person about a marijuana dealer at war with a crack dealer's posse. They attack him in his apartment, but he fires first. *They fell down to the floor but one was still a live/So I put my nine millimeter right between his eyes/Looked at his partner and both of them were dead/So just before he joined his partner this is what I said/Wadadadad wadadada*

dang/Listen to my nine millimeter go bang/Wadadadad wadadada dang/ This is KRS-One

After La Rock's murder, some literal-minded members of the media seized this violent image—the two men pointing pistols on the album cover, the deejay with the small gold handgun trinket dangling from his gold rope chain—and found a self-filling pattern of bloodshed. Esther Iverem of the *New York Times* likened the convergence of hip hop and violence to the clapping of hands.

"This violence," says KRS-One, "it's everyday to the kid in the ghetto. No big deal. They could listen to that just as they listen to Madonna. The reason why we put things like that in there is simply our philosophy on how to teach the kids about the things that are negative in our society. The violent image that we portray is simply a stereotype image. Look at the 'Miami Vice' image. Here you have people blowing people away on the TV screen. But they're in suits and ties, expensive shoes. They're on the cover of *GQ*, right? Now I come out, I'm bad. You see the hypocrisy right away."

"BDP could mean, 'believe[d] dat politically.'" The momentum of KRS-One's laughter finally catches up with him, and he interrupts his monologue to toy with that last phrase. "Belie dat politically. The concept is to be the first reality crew. You have the rap sex symbol, you have the hard rock rapper with nothing in his head. We are the first teachers, someone who is for the public. After you've partied and listened to everything, listen to our albums. We're not like the guys who come out and say, 'Crack is wack, don't do that.' The kids look at you like a god damn idiot. Or the law: 'Don't do it or you go to jail.' Ain't nobody out here scared of jail. At least not the youth. So what I do is simply come out like their friend, like the guy they normally see on the street corner holding a pistol, holding his dick, with a car and a girl and a beeper."

The day before his wedding last summer, I ran into KRS-One at the Music Factory, New York's premiere store for rap music. He was just hanging out, talking to customers, watching *Criminal Minds* sell.

He never did get paid for that album. He never saw his mother again after he left home ten years ago, never finished the college program he began while he was still living in the park and the shelter. Sometimes he speaks of having no friends, only family, by which he means Boogie Down Productions. I ask him an inevitable final question. "I don't regret a minute of my life," he says. "I think leaving home was the best decision I did. I would never be here now. I would probably have a Master's degree in Black History, and I'd probably be a media artist working on Marvel Comics." The laughter comes down in buckets.

The car was smoking. I could actually see liquid pouring across the road and that there were at least three other cars involved. Finally I climbed out of the car and I immediately went down on the grass because I couldn't move my knees, they were both smashed, and I immediately burst out crying. I wasn't so much in pain as in shock. I remember looking in the road and seeing this guy from another car, who had half his leg torn off, rolling around in the road, calling out for help. All I could do was cry.

What's the next car you got?

A 944 Porsche. Now I got a 911 Turbo which is even faster.

OVERHEARD IN AN ELEVATOR

Why does Depeche Mode attract so many young girls?

ANDREW FLETCHER (synthesizers): That's totally untrue. In Europe, I'd say 80 percent of our audience is guys, and over here we do get some young girls, and gays, for some reason, and normal blokes.

ALAN WILDER (synthesizers): But when they cheer, it does sound like a lot of girls, probably because it's mainly the girls screaming.

CONCERT REVIEW IN A LOCAL NEWSPAPER

"If a band can have zero stage presence, Depeche Mode has it. At one point the bottom bleated, an electronic glockenspiel sweetened the top, but no one in the band was touching an instrument."

IN A PARK, UNDER A TREE

ALAN: A lot of music is done through samplings. Sampling is where you record a sound, just like you would on a tape recorder, except instead of tape, you use digital information. You take a tiny bit of a sound, throw the rest out, and by varying the pitch—slowing it down or speeding it up—it becomes a totally different sound from what it was originally. Once that sound is on the keyboard, once it's captured there, you press a key and it's like pressing the start button on a tape recorder or an engine. You can take the most beautiful, purest voice sound in the world and fool around with it digitally until it's the most monstrous, evil sound, or you can take a moose fart and make it beautiful.

Can you order out for sounds like you can a sandwich?

ALAN: Practically. Before starting a record project, we will spend maybe four or five days separately just sampling and building up a massive library that we'll resort to when we're searching for a sound for a particular melody part. And if we think the sounds we already got aren't suitable, we'll carry on looking longer, sampling other stuff.

Where do you usually go?

ALAN: To the local scaperyard.

MARTIN: One of the most interesting places for sampling is your standard kitchen. Plates, glasses can openers, pots and pans—crockery and cutlery—make good percussion sounds. ALAN: The thing is to try to think laterally. If we used a Hoover, it wouldn't be the noise of the Hoover Hoovering you'd hear; it would be the sound you get when you hit the end of the blow

pipe—a great bass sound.

Have you used that bass on any of your songs?

ALAN: On every track of every record. What other "instrument" have you used?

ALAN: The "drum" sound on "Strip" is actually a motorcycle idling, slowed down to a point where it sounds like a huge tractor or a generator.

Did you ever go somewhere to sample and find another band sampling there?

ANDREW: It's not something you see really. You figure you'd see a million of these hip hop people out in the streets, but a lot of them aren't adventurous. We sample from other sources as well, like records, and we still use a lot of synthesizers, and combination sounds, like a car door with a skid.

ALAN: We've sampled a Pygmy doing his wail, but we've turned that into something that sounds nothing like a Pygmy. We also use synthesizers and synthesizer means synthetic. It reproduces sound; it's not actual sound.

Do you wear synthetics?

ALAN: No, I hate nylon and polyester. *And synthetic foods?*

MARTIN: I take ginseng but not vitamins.

ALAN: I take lots of them.

IN A BACK ROOM

MARTIN: Alan, Andy, and I generally like to lurk in the shadows. I hate it when I have to take over the front man role when it's live, even for a couple of songs. We're sort of back room boys. *Which shadows do you like lurking in most?*

ALAN: It's not so much the shadow itself as much as where it is and the

space around it. A tree in a desert is going to cast a much stronger shadow as opposed to a tree in a park.

What back rooms would you like to have been in?

ANDREW: I would have like to have been a fly on the wall in the Berlin bunker during the last days, just as the Russians were coming.

ALAN: There's the bunker, which is immediately a back room, and there'd be another layer of slightly more secretive rooms.

IN A SHELTER FROM A STORM

What don't you get enough of?

ANDREW: Sunlight and air.

And what do you get too much of?

ALAN: Recognition and money—we could get by with less money.

BACK AT THE HOTEL

Which band has the reputation for being the toughest?

DAVID: You mean fighting-wise? There's certain bands you don't mess with and Killing Joke is certainly one. *When was the last time you got into a fistfight?*

DAVID: Last time I got into a fistfight was with a cabby, while he was driving. He was driving about 90 mph, screeching around curves, running through red lights. He wouldn't slow down, so I finally had to start hitting him. When the trip was over I ended up hanging onto the door. Then the guy got out and he was big and fat and started getting real excited. I thought that was it for me. But then his trousers fell down—he didn't have a belt—and he couldn't run or do anything. He just fell over.

JAZZ from page 83

Siberia, halfway around the world.

"Siberia" (in English) is the name of a cooperative Alyosha Krestianov incorporated on March 22nd under a new law allowing private business. Private cooperatives are a key element in the Gorbachev economic restructuring program called perestroika. A hairdresser by trade, Alyosha was Belichenko's assistant during the festival; the day after it was over, he served a sumptuous lunch in his apartment, which is also the cooperative's office. Siberia's logo is "Beauty and Health for Women." Partners include professionals who offer what Alyosha described as "any service a woman needs to ease her non-professional life"—massage, acupuncture, computerized medical diagnosis, and beauty care products.

Alyosha picked the English name with an eye towards eventual export of perfumes and balms. He believes "Siberia" has a wide-open-spaces, ecologically-sound, romantic image

in the West. A shorter-term plan is to provide shopping services. He said deals are being negotiated with stores so that the cooperative will buy clients' groceries while they are being treated in Siberia's shop (which does not yet exist).

"Nyet, nyet," barked Belichenko. "So far this cooperative does nothing but spend money."

"You're not up to date," Alyosha replied, taking Belichenko's pulse. "You've been too busy with your festival. You are not fully informed. We have made great progress these past weeks."

The meal was interrupted by a steady stream of telephone calls. Once, after hanging up, Alyosha announced with satisfaction, "I have just sent a man to Moscow."

"I have no regular job now," he explained. "I work for myself. I work harder than ever, twenty hours a day. I know how to work. I don't like leveling, where somebody doing the same job good or bad gets the same pay. I think better quality should be

rewarded. That's perestroika."

He said he had been the only male in his class at the hairdressing school in Omsk. "I've always been different. Since childhood, I was a difficult person, I always tried to change things. During the period of stagnation I was fired from four jobs. Only now with perestroika, people like me are needed. People who fired me are begging me to come back. Last month the regional director of service industries asked me to be an advisor. He promised me a mountain of gold. I have so many ideas, there are so many possibilities. The Trans-Siberian Express takes two days from Novosibirsk to Moscow. On this train we will install our own salon. The women can use our services and save time."

"Lies, lies," Belichenko insisted. "There's nothing, nothing. Only debts."

"We have calculated everything," Alyosha maintained. "The person who replaced Dr. Zaslavskaya as the director of the Institute of Economics is our advisor. That person has al-

so invested in our cooperative. Our bankers are very sympathetic. Our computer consultant verifies that we make profit."

"Stop!" Belichenko bellowed. "They are dreams, only dreams."

"Your jazz festival was once only a dream," Alyosha said. "Today's dream is tomorrow's reality."

NEWFANGLED JAZZ

Vladimir Chekasin, *Is This Possible?*, (Melodya)

Leonid Chizhik, *The Reminiscences*, (Melodya)

The Vyacheslav Ganelin Trio, *Con Anima*, (Melodya)

The Vyacheslav Ganelin Trio, *Ancora Da Capo*, (Leo Records)

Archangel's, *Archangel's*, (Melodya)

Sergei Kuryok, *The Ways of Freedom*, (Leo Records)

Alexei Kuznetsov, *Django*, (Melodya)

Note: Melodya is the official Soviet record label; Leo Records is a London-based company.



THE REAL MONSTERS OF ROCK



Photographs by Joe Spiegel

The Setting: Major stadiums around the country.

The Lineup: Van Halen, Scorpions, Dokken, Metallica, and Kingdom Come.

The Monsters: Port-O-San, Porta-John, and BFI "Tuff-way" portable toilets.

Cleaning time (per unit): 10-15 minutes, 4-5 minutes, 2-3 minutes (respectively).

Imagine the Port-O-San at 6:00 A.M., the sun rising above the vented roof, rays bouncing off the galvanized steel hat-and-coat hook, the interior filling with the glow of a patron saint, while birds high in the stands call to-and-fro. Now, imagine the same Port-O-San baking in the sun, nine hours and 55,000 heavy metal fans later.

You could be lost in a sea of tattoos at the Hoosier Dome, or up to here in beer in the parking lot at Giants Stadium, and you got to go so bad you don't even know your name. Suddenly, through a maze of bodies, you see one of the true "Monsters of Rock," a seven-foot gleaming white fiberglass shell. The hinged door swings open, and there, posted a foot above the dual-roll toilet tissue dispenser, and illuminated by the domed translucent skylight, is the Check List, dated and signed at each service call with what appears to be Eddie Van Halen's signature.

It seems half the audience is on this line. The other 25,000 fans are on line for the equally versatile Porta-John. Doesn't the interior, with removable Roto-Cast holding tank and flip-top seat, look like it was designed by Danny Stag, Kingdom Come's lead guitarist? It's so rugged and well-built, while quietly blending into its surroundings, that if it weren't for the line, you might not have noticed what's considered by many to be the most ravishing room in the stadium.

Wasn't it Metallica's bass player who transformed the

"Rollaway" toilet into bumper cars at Candlestick Park?

The centerpiece bouquet inside the "Tuff-way" at the Rubber Bowl in Akron, Ohio, was so high the girlfriend of one of the roadies complained she couldn't see Don Dokken across the room, which is about 80 inches by 44 inches.

The showstopper of the tour, of course, was the Port-O-San V.I.P. room at Three River Stadium, with candlelit table, champagne in an ice bucket, and a pile of giant lobsters which, as the evening wore on, slowly cooked in their own juices, while trained monkeys served asparagus Mornay, apple-smoked turkey breast, and angel food cake with caramel ice cream.

Glimpsed on that line were: Lady Ludly, just in from London; the French ambassador and his wife, who flew over on the Concorde; Elizabeth Taylor Iglesias; Tania Van Targoff and her husband Clyde; Mr. and Mrs. Paul, of the fabulous fish fortune; and others too heavy to mention.

June 26-27. Two hundred Port-O-San Model BFG (Braun Fiberglass) non-flushing units with base dimensions of 44 inches by 48 inches and a height of 82 inches are observed standing in the moonlight of Giants Stadium. The BFG has a holding capacity of 45 gallons and weighs 150 lbs. empty, 300 lbs. full.

June 28. 200 BFGs are serviced by tankers equipped with a powerful pump and a long hose, which enters through the bowl and siphons the contents out. Units are "freshened" with five gallons of Alpo-San X-100, an industrial-strength disinfectant.

Since the "Monsters" tour began, people are constantly coming up and asking me which portable holds the most heavy metal bands. The truth is they all hold about the same amount: either two Van Halens, a Metallica and a Scorpion; or two Scorpions and three Dokkens; but not three Dokkens, a Kingdom Come, and Sammy Hagar.

Even though they are owned and operated by unrelated companies in totally different regions of the country, all three brands have inexplicably undergone similar religious experiences:

The Port-O-San went to Palm Springs, where the Devil said, "You look hungry, turn the stone to bread." At the Catskill Mountains, the Devil pointed out the hotels below and said, "Let's see you cast yourself down to be saved by God." "You shall not tempt the Lord," the Port-O-San replied.

The Porta-John went into the forest, confronted the leading gurus of the day, went to the Tree of Illumination, had three temptations, and, like the Port-O-San, came back and chose disciples to spread the word.

The "Tuff-way" went to a cave and meditated until one day a voice said "WRITE," and today we have the Koran.

You can tell a lot about a society by its tallest building. In medieval days, it was the church. Then it was the palace. Then an office building. In Las Vegas, it's a casino. Yesterday, a New York developer unveiled plans for what looks like a grand Port-O-San that will cast a shadow over Central Park from Columbus Circle to East 70th Street.

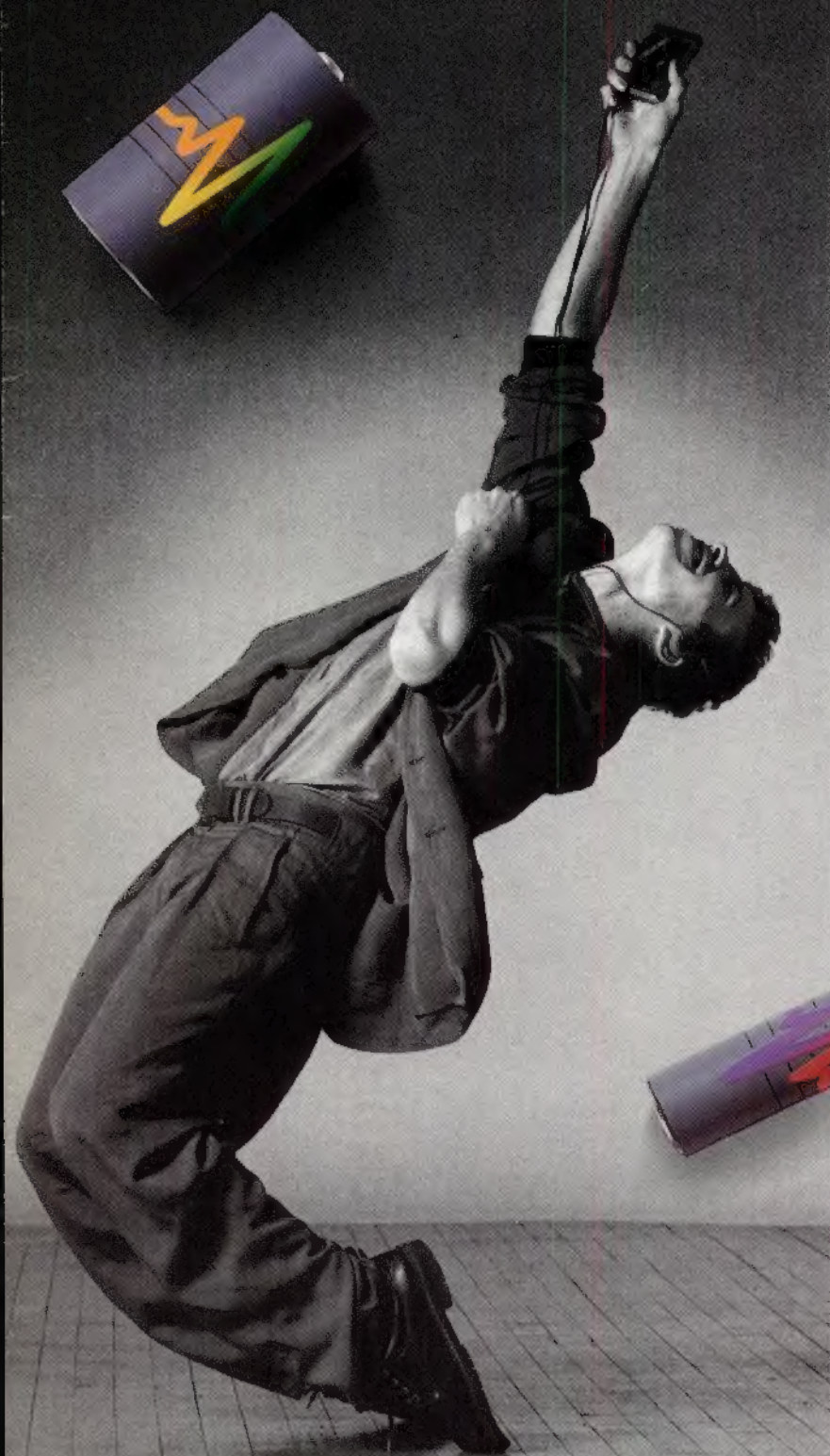
On Saturday, July 30, a fleet of BFI "Tuff-ways" will be placed in position at Mile High Stadium, in Denver, the last concert on the heavy metal tour. BFI maintains a 24-hour hotline and a fleet of radio-controlled trucks. I called the hotline number and a radio-controlled truck pulled up; according to my stop watch, it serviced the "Tuff-way" in an astonishing 2.11 minutes. I asked the route driver, who is bonded and carries a name tag at all times, how he did it. "Simple," he said. "We pump and fill with the same hose."

Then he pulled out his wallet and showed me a color photograph of his family at their summer home in Vermont.

Special Report by Scott Cohen and Joe Spiegel

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